

Riskline / Destination Report

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MEXICO

Overall risk level

<p>Low</p> <p>Take normal safety precautions</p>	<p>Moderate</p> <p>Take normal safety precautions</p>	<p>Medium</p> <p>Exercise caution</p>	<p>High</p> <p>Reconsider travel</p>	<p>Extreme</p> <p>Defer non-essential travel</p>
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The Overall Risk Level will be determined by the higher of the Security Risk Level and Covid-19 Risk Level.

Security risk level

<p>Low</p> <p>Take normal safety precautions</p>	<p>Moderate</p> <p>Take normal safety precautions</p>	<p>Medium</p> <p>Exercise caution</p>	<p>High</p> <p>Reconsider travel</p>	<p>Extreme</p> <p>Defer non-essential travel</p>
Safe, with few security risks	Generally safe, with some predictable security risks	Not completely safe, but typically presents predictable security risks	Can be dangerous and may present unexpected security risks	Extremely dangerous and presents unpredictable security risks
Travel is possible with an expectation of routine disruptions and delays	Travel is possible with an expectation of routine disruptions and delays	Travel is possible, but there is a potential for disruptions	Travel is possible, but there is a potential for disruptions	Chaotic; travel impossible

Covid-19 risk level

<p>Low</p> <p>Take normal safety precautions</p>	<p>Moderate</p> <p>Take normal safety precautions</p>	<p>Medium</p> <p>Exercise caution</p>	<p>High</p> <p>Reconsider travel</p>	<p>Extreme</p> <p>Defer non-essential travel</p>
<p>Travellers should take normal precautions when travelling to Low Risk locations, which have limited or no restrictions on international travel and domestic activities. These locations have very low or no transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and very low infection rates or no new cases of COVID-19 infection. However, in some destinations, low infection rates are due to a lack of official data from local health authorities.</p>	<p>Travellers should take normal precautions when travelling to Moderate Risk locations, which have few restrictions on international travel and limited or no restrictions on domestic activities. These locations have sporadic transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and low to extreme rates of COVID-19 infections.</p>	<p>Unvaccinated travellers should exercise caution when travelling to Medium Risk locations, and vaccinated travellers should take normal precautions. These locations may have some restrictions on international travel, but few restrictions on domestic activities. These locations have clusters of or sporadic transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and moderate to high rates of COVID-19 infections.</p>	<p>Unvaccinated travellers should reconsider their need to travel to High Risk locations, and vaccinated travellers should exercise caution. These locations may have severely restricted international travel and partially restricted domestic activities. These locations have community transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and high rates of COVID-19 infections.</p>	<p>Unvaccinated travellers should defer non-essential travel to Extreme Risk locations, and vaccinated travellers should reconsider their travel. These locations may have severely restricted international travel and domestic activities. These locations have widespread community transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and extremely high rates of COVID-19 infections.</p>

Overview

Upcoming Events

29 October 2023 - 30 October 2023

- **Medium risk:** Flight operations reduction scheduled at Mexico City International Airport from 29 October

Aviation authorities announced a scheduled reduction of flight operations at Benito Juárez International Airport (MEX/MMMX) serving Mexico City from 29 October, due to capacity issues. The airport is expected to reduce the number of flights per hour from 52 to 43.

08 January 2024 - 09 January 2024

- **Medium risk:** Domestic flight operations reduction rescheduled at Mexico City International Airport from 8 January 2024 - Update

Aviation authorities announced the rescheduling of the reduction of domestic flight operations at Mexico City Benito Juárez International Airport (MEX/MMMX) from 8 January 2024. The airport is expected to reduce the number of flights per hour from 52 to 43.

Travel Advisories

● High risk: Drug cartel affected states

Reconsider travel to the states of **Baja California, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Colima, Durango, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Jalisco, Michoacán, Nuevo León, Sonora, Sinaloa, Tamaulipas, Veracruz** and **Zacatecas**, until further notice due to drug cartel-related violence.

With the highest troop concentrations along the **northern border, Pacific Coast** and **central states**, the Mexican Government has targeted the Jalisco Cartel New Generation (CJNG), the Sinaloa Cartel (CDS), Los Zetas, the Gulf Cartel (CDG), the Juárez Cartel, the Tijuana Cartel, Beltrán Leyva, La Familia Michoacana and the Knights Templar as the top nine criminal organisations in the country. Over the past decade, Mexico has faced a wave of drug gang-related violence that has spread from the border with the United States (US) southwards, claiming the lives of 200,000 people with some 100,000 missing and displacing hundreds of thousands since late 2006 – with over 35,000 homicides reported in 2021 alone and just slightly less in 2022, as competition for regional trafficking corridors to the US ignited cartel rivalries. As federal forces continue to make high-profile kingpin arrests – including the leader of Santa Rosa de Lima Cartel (CSRL), José Antonio Yépez Ortiz "El Marro" in August 2020, one of the leaders of the Northeast Cartel (CDN), Juan Gerardo Treviño "El Huevo" and former Guadalajara Cartel leader, Rafael Caro Quintero, in March and July 2022, respectively, and one of Sinaloa Cartel leaders, Ovidio Guzmán, in January 2023 – weakening the interior organisation of major cartel groups, a rise in the number of micro-cartels and smaller gangs is certain to surge to fill power vacuums in pocketed areas of affected states. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)'s most wanted, Nemesio Oseguera Cervantes, "El Mencho", of the CJNG, and Ismael Zambada, "El Mayo", of the Sinaloa Cartel however, remain on the run. Turf battles are being fought between the CJNG and Sinaloa cartels, often allied with or acting through local gangs, particularly in **Guanajuato, Baja California, Michoacán, Zacatecas, Chihuahua** and **Sonora** states. Splintering of operations into new fields, such as kidnapping, extortion and the booming illegal fuel industry, *huachicoleo*, as well as product diversification – as demand for fentanyl and crystal methamphetamine grow in the US – will also lead to an increase in violence as narcos fight to control newly emerging markets. Drug cartels increasingly use roadside bombs, drones

and other improvised explosive devices, with over 42 security force members and suspects wounded and five others killed since 1 January. Brazen daylight shootouts between rival cartels and police are at times a daily occurrence, with local residents, visitors and journalists risking being caught in the crossfire. Criminal organisations also target journalists, with over 150 media workers killed since 1992. Most cases go unsolved; while there is no evidence that the government would actively persecute journalists, it has done very little to prevent the persecution of journalists by other actors. During a record-high year, at least 17 journalists were killed in 2022.

Northern states: A proxy war carried out by associated gangs of the Sinaloa and Juárez cartels, and a power grab by the increasingly militant CJNG, is likely to further intensify in the **'Golden Triangle'** marijuana and poppy cultivation region in **northeastern Sinaloa**, including **Culiacán**, **Sierra Madre Occidental Mountains** in **southwestern Chihuahua** and **northwestern Durango**, following the extradition of "El Chapo" Guzmán to the US in 2017. At least 29 people were killed, including 10 soldiers, and dozens of others wounded or arrested across **Sinaloa** on 5 January 2023, due to armed clashes following the arrest of "El Chapo's" son, Ovidio Guzmán. **Mazatlán (MZT/MMMZ)**, **Culiacán (CUL/MMCL)**, **Los Mochis (LMM/MMLM)** and **Ciudad Obregón (CEN/MMCN) airports** were temporarily closed. Rates of violence are also high in the border cities of **Tijuana (Baja California)** due to ongoing fight between Sinaloa and Tijuana cartels, and the CJNG, with over 11 people killed in cartel-clashes targeting a race event in nearby **Ensenada** on 20 May 2023. Violent clashes have increased also in **Nogales (Sonora)**, **Chihuahua** and **Ciudad Juárez (Chihuahua)**, **Piedras Negras (Coahuila)**, **Madero (Tamaulipas)** and **Nuevo Laredo, Reynosa and Matamoros (Tamaulipas)** due to a bloody war over smuggling routes to the US between the Gulf Cartel, Los Zetas and the CDN as well as in **Nuevo León** and **Sonora**, particularly near **Caborca**, where visitors and residents face increasing threat from armed carjackings amid cartel clashes. Armed forces also face reports of excessive use of force. On 26 February 2023, at least five people, including a US national, were killed when soldiers opened fire at their vehicle in **Nuevo Laredo** following unfounded accusations of shooting at soldiers. A week later, on 3 March, four US nationals were kidnapped in **Matamoros** by suspected Gulf Cartel gunmen who likely mistook the Americans for Haitian drug-traffickers or smugglers. The victims were found several days later; two had been killed and one injured. On 18 May, at least five suspected **Cártel del Noreste** members were killed in clashes with security forces in **Nuevo Laredo** amid narco roadblocks. Security was heightened

in the area, as well as in **Matamoros, Valle Hermoso, San Fernando, Cruillas, Burgos** and **Méndez municipalities**, amid a turf war between CJNG and Gulf Cartel factions. In August 2022, criminal gang members launched arson and gunfire attacks including in **Ciudad Juárez, Tijuana, Mexicali, Ensenada** and **Rosarito**. At least 32 political candidates were murdered in **Sonora** ahead of June 2021 elections, illustrating the lengths that criminal groups are willing to resort to in order maintain the status quo in the states where they operate. In January 2021, authorities discovered 19 shot and burned bodies of Guatemalan migrants in **Gamargo, Tamaulipas**, across the border with Texas, US, as a gruesome reminder that migrants being smuggled to the US are targets of cartel violence and a turf war over smuggling routes. Turf battles have taken place between the Gulf cartel and the old Zetas in **Tamaulipas** for more than a decade. In October 2021, a standoff between Gulf Cartel members and security forces in **downtown Matamoros** left at least four people dead and two others wounded; cartel leader Juan Manuel Loza Salinas was among the dead. In March 2022, the US consulates in **Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas**, and **Piedras Negras, Coahuila**, temporarily closed following armed clashes between drug cartels and security forces in **Nuevo Laredo**, where violent clashes triggered services and transport disruptions again in November. Violent attacks are also increasing in **Zacatecas**, particularly **Fresnillo** amid a conflict between Sinaloa and CJNG cartels, and in **San Luis Potosí** due to the entry of the CJNG to the territory of CDN, Gulf Cartel and Los Zetas.

Pacific Coast states: Security situation remains volatile, as gangs linked to the once powerful Beltrán Leyva cartel, are fighting for dominance in **Guerrero's Costa Grande**, resort city **Acapulco, Chilpancingo, Iguala, Coyuca de Benítez** and **Chilapa**, and **Michoacán's Lázaro Cárdenas Port, Uruapan** and **Zamora** against resurgent groups tied to La Familia Michoacana and the now believed-defunct Knights Templar, as well as Los Tequileros, Cártel del Sur and CJNG, with **Zamora** having one of the highest homicide rates in the country with over 177 homicides per 100,000 people in 2022. In October 2022, at least 18 people were killed after Los Tequileros members attacked the mayor of **San Miguel Totolapan, Guerrero**. Rival Familia Michoacana gang urged everyone to stay indoors in **Arcelia** after the attack. A turf war between the CJNG and Sinaloa Cartel over fentanyl trade has also increased violence in another homicide hotspot **Colima** and its **Manzanillo Port**.

Armed vigilante or self-defence groups, *autodefensas*, born to respond to forced cartel racketeering payments and cartel clashes as local trust in Mexican

authorities diminished, are increasingly accused of participating in criminal activities, or acting as front organisations for the cartels in the **Tierra Caliente region** stretching across **southeastern Michoacán, north-central Guerrero and southwestern Mexico states**. Frequent deadly clashes between the CJNG and Carteles Unidos, and their affiliate 'Los Viagras' erupt in **Aguililla, Tepalcatepec, Buenavista, Apatzingán, Coalcomán** and surrounding municipalities in **Michoacán**, with roads connecting these municipalities frequently being blocked and thousands being displaced in **Tepalcatepec** given the capture of parts of the city by the CJNG. The CJNG has resorted in the use of explosive-laden drones including in **Tepalcatepec** and **Nuevo Poblado el Caracol** to fight the *autodefensas*; triggering displacements along the **Atoyac River** amid an alliance with the Familia Michoacana. Armed vigilante groups are also increasingly active in **Chiapas**, particularly in **Pantelhó** where at least 21 suspected members of the 'Los Herreras' vigilante group were abducted and multiple vehicles and houses set ablaze by the **San José Buena Vista Tercero**-based indigenous 'El Machete' vigilante group in July 2021. Some 3,000 people were forced to displace in prior months due to incursions of criminal groups. CJNG-affiliated 'Los Ciriles' group reportedly earlier took control of **Pantelhó** triggering clashes with security forces. At least five suspected Sinaloa cartel members were killed by the CJNG in the state capital **Tuxtla Gutiérrez** in July 2021, in clashes over the control of the lucrative drugs, arms and human trafficking routes along the Mexico-Guatemala border. Related clashes dispersed thousands and prompted a security operation in **Frontera Comalapa** in late May 2023, as the CJNG seeks to contest the Sinaloa Cartel for the trafficking routes. Attacks against security forces have also increased in Chiapas, where the Secretariat for Citizen Security and Protection (SSyPC) office in **Tapachula** was attacked with explosives and some 14 administrative employees of the SSyPC kidnapped along **Ocozocoautla-Tuxtla Gutiérrez highway** on 27 June. Criminal groups have seized airstrips, control roads and have expelled residents of rural and indigenous communities across the **Lacandon Jungle** increasingly during the past couple of years. Meanwhile, a vigilante attack that followed inter-communal clashes left several people dead and wounded in **San Esteban Atatlahuca, Tlaxiaco, Oaxaca**, in October 2021. The government is under investigation over ties with narcos in the CJNG's birth-state - **Jalisco**, with violent incidents increasing in touristic **Puerto Vallarta** and **Metropolitan Guadalajara, Nayarit's Nuevo Vallarta, Tepic** and **San Blas**, as well as in **Cabo San Lucas, San Jose del Cabo** and **La Paz** in **Baja California Sur**.

Central states: Drug-related violence, kidnapping and extortion is an increasing

problem in **Mexico, Morelos and Mexico City**, and particularly in **Guanajuato's Irapuato, Salamanca and Celaya**, where violent clashes between the CJNG and *Cártel de Santa Rosa de Lima (CSRL)* frequently erupt over trafficking routes and *huachicoleo*. A wave of arson attacks targeting stores and vehicles was reported in parts of **Guanajuato state** in early August 2022, while on 22 March 2023, cartel gunmen assassinated the Security Secretary of Guanajuato municipality in the outskirts of **Guanajuato city**. Earlier, in July 2020, at least 26 people were killed in a rehab centre in **Irapuato** in a cartel shooting, while a month earlier, at least three people were killed and several others wounded during an exchange of gunfire between security forces and suspected CJNG members who ambushed the motorcade of the Secretary of Citizen Security (SSC) in **Mexico City's Lomas de Chapultepec** neighbourhood. Brazen shootings have increased; a suspected cartel member was killed in a **Mexico City** mall on 20 April 2023. Heightened security measures were implemented in **Guanajuato state** – the state with the most homicides for the fifth consecutive year in the country with 3,240 homicides reported in 2022 – following the arrest of the CSRL leader, "El Marro", in August 2020 amid a leadership dispute. *Huachicoleo* is rife also in parts of **Hidalgo** where *Pueblos Unidos* group competes with CJNG or *Zetas Vieja Escuela (Old School Zetas)*. Multiple criminal groups, including *La Unión de Tepito, Fuerza Anti-Unión Tepito* and *Cártel de Tláhuac*, as well as the CJNG, *Sinaloa Cartel, La Familia Michoacana* and *Beltrán Leyva* are present in **Valle de México area**. The CJNG has reportedly formed an alliance with the *Fuerza Anti-Unión Tepito*, disputing the control of the northeastern part of **Mexico City**, against *Unión Tepito*. At least 13 police officers were killed in a retaliation attack by *La Familia Michoacana* in **Coatepec Harinas, State of México**, in March 2021.

Gulf Coast and Caribbean states: Reports of insecurity are also increasing in **Tabasco** and **Veracruz**, including the capital and its port, where the *Zetas* find themselves locked in battle with the CJNG. Although tourists have not been directly targeted, since 2017 shooting incidents have encroached on touristic areas once regarded as safe, including **Cancún, Playa del Carmen, Tulum** and **Cozumel** in **Quintana Roo** as *Gulf Cartel* offshoots fight against *Los Zetas* and the CJNG.

Reconsider travel to the affected states until further notice due to drug cartel-related violence. Although cartels generally do not target foreign nationals, bloody counter-offensives are unpredictable and visitors can be caught in the crossfire. Daylight gun battles are not uncommon. Violence has also encroached on touristic areas once regarded as safe, including in **Guerrero, Quintana Roo, Jalisco**,

Nayarit and **Baja California Sur**. Maintain a low profile and avoid travelling alone or after dark as criminal gangs often target individuals based on an appearance of vulnerability and perceived wealth. Restrict moving into isolated areas, which are unlikely to be frequented by tourists. Register travel details with local embassies and consider travelling with a security detail on high-risk highways in violence-affected states. Travellers are strongly advised to always stop at checkpoints, regardless of whether it is legal or illegal, cooperate and avoid any actions that may be perceived to be suspicious or aggressive.

● **Medium risk: Border with Guatemala**

Exercise caution for travel within 10km (6.21 miles) of the border with Guatemala on an ongoing basis due to crime and smuggling activities.

The border area between Mexico and Guatemala, especially close to the Pacific coast, is an area of concern as a result of increasing insecurity deriving from robberies, clashes among criminal groups over local protection rackets, and also migrant smuggling, rather than transnational trafficking. The National Guard and the National Institute of Migration (INM) have increased security measures in the border areas of **Chiapas**, including **Ciudad Hidalgo, Tapachula** and along the **Suchiate River** due to a large number of migrants moving en masse from Honduras through Guatemala to Mexico and beyond periodically since 2018. Border crossings, particularly the Tecún Umán (Guatemala)-**Ciudad Hidalgo** and El Carmen (Guatemala)-**Tapachula** locations, are subject to periodic closures due to clashes between security forces and migrants. In August 2023, public transport workers blocked the highway to Guatemala border near **Tapachula**, to denounce insecurity. In April 2021, the United States entered an agreement with Mexico and its Central American neighbours to bolster the presence of their respective security forces in border areas to curb illegal migration. Earlier, in October 2018, a Honduran migrant was killed and dozens of others injured at the **Tecún Umán** border crossing when Mexican Federal police fired rubber bullets and tear gas to block migrants from attempting to enter **Ciudad Hidalgo** following clashes between some 2,000 Central American migrants and Guatemalan police. In March 2021, a Mexican soldier shot and killed a fleeing migrant at the border in **Chiapas** prompting some 300 Mexican and Guatemalan nationals to attack soldiers and kidnap 15 Mexican soldiers in retribution. All soldiers were released after the payment of ransom and a commitment to holding the soldier who shot the migrant responsible. The number of Central and South American, including

Venezuelan and Nicaraguan and Cuban and Haitian migrants, and asylum seekers who are fleeing violence in their countries and who are held back by the tightening of controls in the US continue to rise, while the understaffed and overstretched Mexican system for adjudicating asylum cases is close to collapse. Arrivals in the southern border have further increased after the end of the Title 42 decree in the US in May 2023, with upwards of 40,000 migrants reported in **Tapachula** alone.

Following pressure from the US administration, Mexico has increased migrant detentions and deportations; at least 171,800 people were deported in 2022. Checkpoints are frequent on arterial roads in southern states, prompting an increase in oversea human trafficking. Nationals of Caribbean states rarely meet the requirements established by the legislation to obtain a Visitor Card for Humanitarian Reasons in Mexico. Frustrated by delayed visa processes and overcrowded shelters, hundreds of migrants have fled from the INM detention centres in **Chiapas**, with several migrants injured during the attempt or during clashes with police and INM officials. Thousands of migrants have passed by or continue to loiter in **Tapachula, Huixtla, Escuintla** and other towns along the migrant route across **Chiapas** triggering related unrest and temporary business closures.

While **Chiapas** has experienced little gang-violence, the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG) is increasingly contesting the Sinaloa cartel over the control of the lucrative drugs, arms and human trafficking routes along the **Mexico-Guatemala border**. Criminal groups have seized airstrips, control roads and have expelled residents of rural and indigenous communities across the **Lacandon Jungle**. Over 3,000 residents of **Frontera Comalapa** were displaced and some 60 people were reportedly killed in cartel clashes in June. Assailants attacked the Secretariat for Security and Citizen Protection (SSyPC) headquarters in **Tapachula** with an explosive device on 27 June, while at least 14 SSyPC workers were temporary kidnapped along **Ocozocoautla-Tuxtla Gutiérrez highway** the same day. On 29 August, at least six people were killed in clashes between organised crime groups in **Siltepec municipality**. Earlier, at least five suspected Sinaloa cartel members were killed by the CJNG in the state capital **Tuxtla Gutiérrez** in July 2021, while clashes between criminal outfits are reported periodically in **San Gregorio Chamich** and other locations near the border with Guatemala's Huehuetenango department. Armed clashes erupted at a market in **San Cristóbal de las Casas** in June 2021. Tensions and xenophobia have increased in **Chiapas** due to institutional discourse that links Central American migrants with insecurity,

economic problems and organised crime. Although the Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) and Barrio 18 (MB-18) criminal gangs based in Guatemala have penetrated the **Tuxtla Chico, Metapa, Frontera, Suchiate, Huixtla** and **Tapachula municipalities** in the southern border territory, they tend to prey on migrants from Central and South American countries rather than visitors. Official and illegal roadblocks and military checkpoints are also common in **Chiapas**. Locals perceive the border region's largest city of **Tapachula** as the most dangerous municipality in **Chiapas**, especially in terms of public transport due to petty thefts in vehicles and stations, as well as abuse and harassment committed either by drivers or in complicity with criminals. Most incidents of theft on public transport occur between December and January.

While foreign nationals are unlikely to be the direct target of any criminal activity or violence associated with it, the risk of incidental or by-stander injury is possible. It is advisable to use first-class bus services and travel during daylight. Stop at all security checkpoints and be ready to present official documentation when asked – copies are generally not accepted. Register travel details with local embassies or consulates and consider utilising local reputable guides for travel and security escorts outside of urban centres in these isolated rural areas.

● **Moderate risk:** Migration prompts heightened security on the US-Mexico border

Anticipate delays and disruptions for travel along the **United States (US)-Mexico border** in the near-term, due to increased security measures.

Since mid-April, US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials have facilitated an increased number of deportations. Some 8,700 apprehensions were registered daily along the border in early May, up from 5,200 daily average in March, though these numbers have since fallen significantly. Thousands of migrants continue to wait to cross the border, including at **Matamoros (Tamaulipas)-Brownsville (Texas)**, **Nuevo Laredo (Tamaulipas)-Laredo (Texas)**, **Colombia (Nuevo Leon)-Laredo (Texas)**, **Piedras Negras (Coahuila)-Eagle Pass (Texas)**, **Ciudad Juárez (Chihuahua)-El Paso (Texas)**, **Reynosa (Tamaulipas)-McAllen (Texas)**, **Puerto Jerónimo (Chihuahua)-Santa Teresa (New Mexico)**, **Hombres Blancos (Sonora)-Lukeville (Arizona)**, **Heroica Nogales (Sonora)-Nogales (Arizona)** and **Tijuana (Baja California)-San Ysidro (California)**. Since US authorities ended the Title 42 public health rule that allowed them to quickly expel migrants to Mexico or their home countries in May, the CBP has returned to pre-pandemic policies where

migrants are either removed from the country, detained or released into the US while waiting for their court appearance. US authorities have also set up regional processing centres and additional facilities along the border to process migrants, as other detention facilities have reached capacity. With the new rules, all migrants will be deemed ineligible for asylum if they cannot prove they previously requested protection in a third country on their way to the US, while those who cross illegally will be ineligible for asylum with a few exceptions and those removed will not be allowed to re-enter the US for five years and could face criminal prosecution. Despite initial concerns regarding a surge in migrant crossings, the rescinding of Title 42 has so far instead seen a significant drop in crossings. CBP officials are calling on people to schedule appointments through CBP One application to avoid delays and disruptions at the border crossings. Most entries are of individuals and family units from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela.

Despite a decline in unauthorised entries, officials in **Texas** have declared a state of emergency along the border to surge resources to local authorities under the aegis of "Operation Lone Star". Currently, Texas officials are embroiled in a legal fight with the federal government over floating barriers set up along the **Rio Grande** to discourage migrant entry; the Mexican government has also protested the measure. In September, the Defense Department deployed additional troops at the **US-Mexico border** due to a surge in border crossings including **Eagle Pass, Texas**, where the mayor has declared a state of emergency. Vehicle travel was also temporarily halted at the **Eagle Pass border crossing** with **Piedras Negras** in **Coahuila**.

Anticipate disruptions to cross-border travel in the near-term. Follow all directives; keep valid identification on hand at all times. Processing and traffic times have slowly at all border crossings did to increased random inspections of vehicles. In 2022, long wait times and protests resulted at **Mexico-Texas ports of entry** due to a customs dispute over vehicle inspections. Demonstrations and roadblocks by migrants demanding entry to the US can take place on short notice; allow for additional travel time and plot route bypasses. Traffic is also routinely disrupted by law enforcement operation on both sides of the border to pursue drug and people smugglers. Avoid all large public gatherings and concentrations of security forces. Leave the scene of any unrest.

● **Moderate risk:** Outbreak of mosquito-borne viruses in the Americas

Mosquito-borne virus cases have seen a steep upward trend in the Americas in 2023, and are expected to rise further amid increasing temperatures. Take measures to prevent mosquito bites and ensure vaccine coverage and medication before departure.

Several mosquito-borne viruses (Chikungunya, dengue, malaria, yellow fever, Zika) are endemic to tropical and subtropical regions of **Central** and **South America**, the **Caribbean**, **Mexico** and the **United States**, and appear in both rural and urban areas, most often during the rainy season, which varies from country to country.

Climate change, deforestation and urbanisation are some of the factors behind the increasing number of outbreaks of mosquito-borne viruses. Mosquitoes thrive under increased precipitation and higher temperatures; outbreaks have increased even in areas of dry weather. Following a two to seven year cycle, El Niño weather phenomenon is developing since June, further increasing the risk of higher temperatures across the region and above-normal rainfall with an increased risk of flooding on the **West Coast** of the **United States**, **Peru** and **Ecuador**.

Dengue accounts for the largest number of cases in the Americas region, with epidemics occurring every three to five years. In **South America**, dengue is moving further south to countries such as **Bolivia**, **Peru** and **Paraguay**, with over 2.8 million cases reported in 2022 compared to 1.2 million a year earlier. Since January 2023, over three million cases have been reported in the Americas with higher-than-usual numbers of dengue cases reported in **Argentina**, **Bolivia**, **Brazil**, **Colombia**, **Cuba**, the **Dominican Republic**, **Guadeloupe**, **Guatemala**, **Martinique**, **Nicaragua**, **Panama**, **Paraguay** and **Peru**. Confirmed cases of chikungunya have also increased from 50,000 in 2022 to over 138,000 in 2023 in the region, with an expansion observed beyond historical areas of transmission. **Paraguay** and **Brazil** reported the highest infection rates. Reported cases of Zika virus have remained in a lower level than in 2022, with **Brazil**, **Bolivia** and **Belize** reporting the highest numbers. While malaria has been nearly or completely eradicated in many countries in the Americas, the region remains vulnerable to outbreaks. **Costa Rica** has reported an ongoing outbreaks of malaria in **Limón**, **Alajuela** and **Puntarenas provinces**, with over 400 cases reported since April. The impact of the increased transmission will depend on several factors, including country capacities for a coordinated public health response, high mosquito densities due to interrupted vector control activities during the COVID-19 pandemic and the susceptibility to infections, particularly in areas where these

viruses are newly circulating.

In 2022, cases of both dengue and chikungunya peaked in May in the southern hemisphere. Higher transmission rates are expected in the coming months, due to weather conditions favourable for the proliferation of mosquitoes. Such an increase may be followed by a high transmission season in the northern hemisphere, given the susceptible populations and increasing temperatures.

Symptoms and Treatment

Each of these viruses when contracted present their own list of symptoms and require varied treatment plans, whether preventative or reactive.

Viral infections transmitted by the bite of the **Aedes** mosquito include chikungunya, dengue fever, yellow fever and Zika virus. The most common virus transmitted by the bite of the *Anopheles* mosquito is malaria. Both insects are most active during early morning and late afternoon hours, though some species are nocturnal making preventative measures like repellents and mosquito nets an important strategy.

Cases of Zika virus are usually mild and include symptoms of fever, headaches, conjunctivitis, rash and joint and muscle pain; most cases are asymptomatic. Zika virus may also be transmitted through sexual contact with an infected person and has been linked to microcephaly in unborn children. There is no treatment for Zika virus, beyond rehydration and bed rest.

Initial symptoms of yellow fever include a high fever, chills, vomiting, nausea and backaches/muscle pain, with a risk of potentially fatal complications, including jaundice, severe haemorrhaging and kidney failure. There is no post-infection treatment for yellow fever, making vaccination against the disease imperative prior to travel.

Symptoms of dengue fever include a high fever, joint pain and headaches, although severe cases may cause significant falls in blood pressure and/or haemorrhaging, which can be fatal. There are no treatments for dengue fever though vaccine research is ongoing.

Symptoms of chikungunya fever include a high fever, joint pain and headaches; the disease is typically non-fatal. In most cases those infected recover after seven to ten days. There are no vaccines or treatments for chikungunya.

Symptoms of malaria include a high fever, joint pain, anaemia, chills and

headaches; if left untreated, symptoms can become life-threatening. While pre-departure courses of anti-malarial prophylactics are available, these do not guarantee immunity to malaria. If contracted and caught early, malaria can be treated easily with a range of anti-malarial medications.

Travellers are advised to take measures to prevent mosquito bites such as wearing long sleeves and pants, applying insect repellent to exposed skin and clothing, using a bed net when sleeping in a room that is not screened or air-conditioned. Travellers should ensure they are up-to-date on vaccines before departure, consult medical professionals about use of prophylactics, take precaution with selection of sexual partners and ensure use of protection.

● **Medium risk: Heat wave disruptions across the Americas**

Exercise caution for travel in multiple North and South American countries and territories, namely the **United States (US), Canada, Mexico, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile** and **Paraguay**, in the medium-term due to health risks and possible travel disruptions from ongoing as well as forecast heat waves.

Prolonged exposure to high temperatures or high humidity levels have been attributed to dozens of heat-related deaths across **Mexico** and the **US** over the past several weeks. Similar weather conditions have been reported in parts of South America, including **Argentina, Bolivia, Chile** and **Paraguay** where an unseasonal heat wave is linked to a stagnant anticyclone, resulting in a suspension of air circulation and temperatures of over 20 degrees Celsius (68 degrees Fahrenheit) higher than typical for the winter season. During this time, authorities have issued temporary heat wave warnings covering over 100 million people in the **US** alone, and forecasters expect such warnings to continue in many areas of the affected countries/territories in the near-term.

Apart from affecting health conditions directly, heat waves can trigger disruptions to essential services and overland travel, while warmer temperatures increase the transmission of diseases. Heightened demand for air conditioning can lead to planned or unplanned power outages and the firing of coal plants to meet such demands can produce unhealthy levels of air pollution. Prolonged heat waves can damage road surfaces and deform railway tracks. Extreme temperatures can trigger drought, bushfires and even flooding and mudslides, when snow melt accelerates in mountain ranges, causing considerable damage to crops and infrastructure. High temperatures can also prolong wildfires, resulting in haze and

evacuations, as witnessed across **Canada**, and subsequent air quality issues in parts of the **US** since May. Similar situations are possible in wildfire-prone areas of other countries as well.

Meteorological experts have attributed global warming and the El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) phase warming the Pacific Ocean temperatures, among other factors, as causes of these heat waves. August, September and October are typical hurricane season months when temperatures still remain high in parts of North America and the Caribbean, while South America is heading towards warmer summer months. **Chile** already faces a severe drought from a heat wave in February which resulted in several deaths from wildfires. The biggest impacts of El Niño are expected in February, March and April 2024.

Travellers are advised to check weather forecasts of destinations. There is no universally agreed-upon minimum temperature that qualifies as a heat wave. Temperatures reaching 38 degrees Celsius (100.4 degrees Fahrenheit) often trigger warnings in many countries, but it is generally advisable to avoid enduring any degree of uncomfortable temperature for an extended period of time. Temperatures detrimental to health can vary from person to person and depend on the humidity level, among other factors. When travelling to heat-wave-affected locations, ensure a steady supply of safe drinking water and access to air-conditioned accommodations with sufficient power supply before departure. During hot temperatures, increase non-alcoholic fluid intake, limit outdoor movements during daylight hours and stay in air-conditioned rooms when possible. Anticipate possible travel disruptions from high temperatures damaging transportation infrastructure and heightening the demand for electricity. In case of a wildfire resulting from high temperatures, follow all emergency directives. When pollution levels are high due to wildfires, avoid unnecessary outdoor activities, wear a respiratory mask and expect possible disruptions to overland and air travel from low visibility.

Summary

Overall ● Medium Risk

Mexico is a **Medium Risk** destination: exercise caution.

Security ● Medium Risk

Medium Risk locations are not completely safe, but typically present predictable security risks. Travel is possible, but there is a potential for disruptions.

Covid-19 ● Low Risk

Borders are open and economic activities have resumed nationwide. The testing rate is among the lowest in the region and healthcare capacity was struggling amid a fifth wave of COVID-19 which peaked in mid-July 2022, with cases steadily decreasing since.

The sanitary emergency due to COVID-19 was declared over on 9 May.

Political Instability ● Moderate Risk

Mexico has a relatively stable, democratic government system which operates on a congressional model within a multi-party electoral system. Frustrated by the failures of the PAN and PRI parties to reduce public insecurity, corruption, impunity and poverty over the past several decades, Mexican voters handed the leftist populist President Andrés Manuel López Obrador and his MORENA party a clear mandate in the 2018 election. High income inequality, corruption and organised drug-related crime remain the most significant threats to stability.

Conflict ● High Risk

Although the country is not presently engaged in an external conflict, the Mexican military have been deployed internally in an effort to root out drug cartels and supplant corrupt local police. The military is also accused of significant abuses. Despite the AMLO administration refusing a "war on cartels" approach, a new National Guard has been deployed to fight organised crime, seen as a top threat to Mexican national security. Fighting is unpredictable and travellers are at risk of being caught in the crossfire.

Terrorism ● Low Risk

Although there do not appear to be any international or transnational terrorist groups currently active in Mexico, lax immigration controls (particularly along the Mexico-Guatemala border), the ease with which fake Mexican travel documents can be obtained, and Mexico's geographic location make the country an attractive transit point for potential transnational terrorists. In the past decades, Mexico has faced bombings against oil interests led by a little-known domestic leftist rebel group People's Revolutionary Army (EPR) and a series of small explosions in Mexico City and cartel-affected territories. Outside of major urban centres, emergency response facilities are limited and lacking in resources.

Unrest ● Moderate Risk

Protests are a fact of life in Mexico, particularly in **Mexico City**, where they usually occur in the city centre, while outside of the capital demonstrations are held periodically in urban centres or along arterial highways. Rural protests are largely concentrated in **Guerrero, Oaxaca** and **Chiapas states**. Although largely peaceful, such events have the potential to cause severe traffic disruptions, damage to infrastructure or escalation into violence.

Crime ● High Risk

Criminal gang activity and drug-related crime are pervasive throughout Mexico, but particularly rife along the **Mexico-US border** and in the **Tierra Caliente region** of southwestern Mexico, prompting the deployment of the military on many occasions. The most common type of crime travellers will likely face in Mexico is petty crime, most commonly in busy areas and on public transport. Armed robbery, sexual assault and kidnapping are also not uncommon in areas frequented by tourists, including in **Mexico City**, while impunity remains high.

Natural and Environmental ● Medium Risk

As the fourth largest country in the Americas, Mexico is exposed to a variety of natural phenomena on a regional basis: earthquakes and volcanic activity in the **central** and **southern states**, hurricanes on the **Pacific** and **Gulf of Mexico coastlines**, flooding in the **southeastern states**, and drought in the **northern states**. The country's critical infrastructure is not fully capable of withstanding major environmental calamities.

Health and Medical ● Moderate Risk

Adequate medical and emergency facilities are in place in all major cities, while excellent health facilities are available in **Mexico City** and other metropolitan cities; outside of urban centres, facilities are limited and lacking in resources. The availability of emergency responders may be below international standards. Malaria and dengue fever are common in some low-lying areas of Mexico, and the quality of tap water cannot be guaranteed.

Local Travel ● Medium Risk

Urban public transport including in **Mexico City** is insecure due to pickpocketing; ride-share services or radio-taxis are safer. Roads in central Mexico are in decent condition and are generally well marked, as are roads in areas typically visited by tourists. Avoid travelling near the **Mexico-Guatemala border**, areas surrounding northern border towns and remote regions where drug traffickers and gangs are known to operate. Police checkpoints are common, and vigilante groups and demonstrators may establish blockades. Domestic airlines or luxury buses are a reliable option for inter-city travel.

Political Overview : ● Moderate Risk

Three-time presidential candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) was elected president of Mexico in 2018, in a landslide victory and major upset to the country's political establishment, which had been dominated by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), and to a lesser extent the National Action Party (PAN), for decades. AMLO took 53 percent of the vote, with his nearest rival - PAN's Ricardo Anaya - winning 22 percent. Frustrated by the failures of the PAN and PRI to reduce public insecurity, corruption, impunity and poverty over the past several decades, Mexican voters handed the leftist populist a clear mandate.

AMLO's National Regeneration Movement (MORENA) and its allies still wield considerable power in both houses of Congress, although losing some seats to the opposition coalition in the June 2021 legislative election. After losing the two-thirds majority required to make constitutional amendments, AMLO will need to negotiate to deliver on his campaign promise to radically reshape Mexico, which includes measures to drastically increase spending on social programmes, root out systemic "morbid" corruption and enact changes to the constitution, federal laws and government agencies to concentrate power in the executive branch. Funding social programmes by cutting corruption from government spending is unlikely to be enough, and AMLO, a fierce opponent of the privatisation of the oil industry, would have to choose between respecting existing contracts concerning the country's energy reform, which opened up large parts of the industry to private investment, or else stifling economic growth and investor confidence. Political tensions and violence increased in the run-up to the 2021 elections, with over 690 candidates and party members killed nationwide, and are expected to increase again ahead of the June 2024 general election where both MORENA and Va Por México opposition coalition are yet to announce their candidates. Nonetheless, AMLO is instituting a change in the political culture and encouraging a civically engaged society through his daily press conference.

Tackling insecurity attributed to the production and trafficking of drugs have remained a significant challenge for AMLO. Powerful criminal cartels hold writ over parts of the country where the government has been unable to make its presence felt, particularly in the **Tierra Caliente, Golden Triangle** and neighbouring states where poppy and marijuana fields blossom and the **northern border region**, home to key smuggling routes into the United States (US). Since 2006, when then-president Felipe Calderón of the PAN militarised a war on drugs targeting cartel kingpins, more than 200,000

people have died and over 100,000 remain missing. Politicians have been implicated in colluding with cartels. The Calderón-era ex-security minister Genaro García Luna was convicted of drug trafficking and taking millions of dollars from the Sinaloa Cartel in the US in February 2023. AMLO's plan to tackle violence by the implementation of a new National Guard, militarisation of public security and treating the root causes of the violence has not been without controversy and removed from his own nationalistic and isolationist ideals. The likelihood of such plans succeeding is questionable due to the entrenchment and scale of organised criminal groups and systematic corruption at all levels of government in the country. Vigilante attacks and mob justice appear to be on the rise amid an apparent return to the grisly mass executions that marked Mexico's 2006-2012 drug war, while the murder rate in 2019 hit the record of over 34,580 homicides, which only slightly decreased since. Crime, corruption and violence are likely to persist as main threats to political stability in the long-term.

Recent incidents

05 June 2023 - 06 June 2023

● **Moderate risk:** Morena wins in State of México, PRI in Chihuahua – Update

Preliminary results indicated that the Morena party's candidate Delfina Gómez won a gubernatorial seat in State of México in the 4 June election in a major blow to the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) that had ruled for over 86 years in the state. PRI-led coalition candidate Manolo Jiménez claimed victory in Chihuahua, amid accusations of intimidation and alleged kidnapping of PT and Morena activists.

04 June 2023 - 05 June 2023

● **Moderate risk:** Local elections to be held in México and Coahuila states on 4 June

The National Electoral Institute (INE) announced that gubernatorial elections will be held in México and Coahuila states on 4 June; in Coahuila, voters will also ballot for state legislators. Candidates of the PRD-PRI-PAN coalition, Va por México, will face candidates from the Morena party in both states.

Conflict : ● High Risk

Drug Cartels: The Mexican military has been deployed internally in an effort to root out drug cartels and supplant corrupt local police that protect drug traffickers. Despite the AMLO administration refusing a "war on cartels" approach applied by previous administrations, a new National Guard has been deployed to fight organised crime as a top threat to national security. In recent years, Mexico has seen fragmenting of its drug cartel organisational environment due to government operations that have increased instability within the groups, an increase in violence and diversification of criminal operations into areas such as human smuggling and oil theft. With the highest troop concentrations along the northern border with the United States (US), but increasingly also in affected states in the interior, the government has targeted the Jalisco Cartel New Generation (CJNG), Sinaloa Federation, Los Zetas, Gulf Cartel, Juárez Cartel, Tijuana Cartel, Beltrán Leyva, La Familia Michoacana and Knights Templar (Caballeros Templarios) as the top criminal organisations in the country. Drug gang-related violence has claimed the lives of more than 200,000 people since 2006. Authorities managed to deliver significant blows to the internal structures of the Sinaloa Cartel, Gulf Cartel, Los Zetas, CJNG and Knights Templar in recent years, following the arrest of their leaders, including Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzmán Loera. The setbacks have been attributed to the main driving force for several of the drug outfits, including the CJNG, Los Zetas, Tijuana Cartel and Beltrán Leyva, to allegedly be pursuing newfound alliances, as well as fragmentation. Although cartels generally do not target foreign nationals, fighting is unpredictable and visitors can be caught in the crossfire, with the states of **Baja California, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Colima, Durango, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Jalisco, Michoacán, Nuevo León, Sonora, Sinaloa, Tamaulipas, Veracruz** and **Zacatecas** most affected.

The number of armed vigilante groups and so-called self-defence clubs, including indigenous militias, has also increased exponentially in frontline cartel states, notably in the **Tierra Caliente region** stretching across some areas of the states of **Michoacán, Guerrero** and **State of Mexico**, as well as in parts of **Chiapas**, as local trust in authorities continues to diminish. The circumstances triggering the formation of each vigilante group, their type and level of organisation, as well as the sophistication of weapons used, vary from town to town; however, defence against forced cartel "protection" or racketeering payments is often the starting point. Nonetheless, as is the case with some federal and local policing units, many self-defence groups have themselves been accused of participating in criminal activities, or

acting as front organisations for the cartels.

Vigilante attacks and mob justice appear to be on the rise amid an apparent return to the grisly mass executions that marked Mexico's 2006-2012 drug war. Violent clashes among criminal gangs and self-defence militias are also on the rise, particularly in **Guerrero**. Rural Defense Corps were launched in **Michoacán** to work with both local law enforcement and the National Guard to hinder organised crime. The success of which remains to be seen.

Mexico City and its immediate surroundings have been among the areas least affected by the bloody turf wars between drug gangs and their clashes with security forces. But the bloodletting has gradually crept up in the capital and the neighbouring **State of Mexico**. Kidnappings and forced cartel "protection" or racketeering payments have also increased.

Guerrilla/Insurgency: In the early to mid-1990s, Mexico experienced a brief armed struggle by the indigenous population in the southern state of **Chiapas**. The indigenous population has been largely excluded from the political process and from business interests of Mexico, and was fighting for greater political autonomy. The Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) launched its armed struggle on 1 January 1994, partially in protest against the neo-liberal North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between Mexico, the US and Canada.

The Zapatista rebels numbered about 3,000 at their height and pursued a low-intensity guerrilla campaign until a series of negotiations gave communities in **Chiapas state** a greater say in the administration of the area. The low-level guerrilla uprising has now subsided, and the Zapatistas are a negligible security threat. They still maintain a strong presence in **Chiapas**, however, especially around **San Cristóbal de las Casas**.

The Triqui Indians in the **San Juan Copala** municipality declared autonomy from **Oaxaca state** in 2007. The declaration has been dismissed by state authorities and subject to a blockade by paramilitary groups loyal to the state government. Permanent police facilities have been withdrawn from the municipality to avoid igniting hostilities amongst the indigenous people. Travellers are advised to avoid non-essential travel to the area due to the possibility of violent clashes between paramilitary groups and the Triqui Indians.

Strength of Military Forces: The Mexican military is responsible for external and internal security and defence against natural disasters. It is divided into two branches:

the Mexican Army (which includes the Air Force) and the Mexican Navy. The total number of active personnel in the military is estimated at 250,000. Furthermore, upwards of 120,000 members of the National Guard reinforce ongoing security operations against criminal organisations. The military is accused of significant abuses while acting as a wing of the police against narco-traffickers; reported activities include rape, torture and murder. A lack of transparency precludes the possibility of short-term redress.

Terrorism

Bombings: Domestically, Mexico has faced bombings against oil interests led by a little-known leftist rebel group in the past and a series of small explosions in the capital, which authorities blame on the country's lucrative drug cartels. Such bombings typically employ low-power devices, suggesting that the attacks are not designed to maximise casualties. Nevertheless, there remains an incidental risk to passers-by. Such bombings have not been reported in the past decade.

Unideological bombings have also been reported. In 2021, two people were killed when an improvised explosive device was detonated outside a restaurant in **Salamanca, Guanajuato state**. Although a preliminary investigation pointed to organised crime, the Prosecutor's Office later indicated that the attack was an act of revenge for economic reasons. In 2018, at least 20 people were injured when an improvised explosive device detonated on a tour boat arriving in **Playa del Carmen** from **Cozumel island**; days later local authorities found an undetonated device on another ferry operating on the same route. Authorities ruled out terrorism and organised crime, but Cartel de "El Pumba y Tata", likely a Los Zetas-linked group, claimed responsibility and threatened the mayor of **Cozumel**.

Other violent episodes that have occurred in Mexico during the last 20 years have involved narcotic gangs targeting one another and occasional terror acts carried out by the Zapatistas in the mid-1990s.

Domestic Terrorism: In the past, Mexican insurgency, known as the People's Revolutionary Army (EPR), has initiated a bombing campaign to cause maximum economic damage to Mexico's national oil company, Pemex, and international business interests in the country. Bombings in 2007 reportedly caused hundreds of millions of dollars in damage due to lost production and interrupted natural gas supplies. No injuries or deaths associated with the bombings have been reported. No new attacks have been reported.

International Terrorism: Although it is thought there are no known international terrorist groups currently active in Mexico, due to the country's expansive size, porous southern border controls, and general environment of crime, it may be a matter of time before international groups use Mexico as a transit point or staging ground for attacks outside the country. Hezbollah is already known to be active in other Latin American countries (Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina) and other international radical

religious groups are thought to be involved in the narcotics trade in Central American countries. In the southern state of **Chiapas** some hundreds members of the indigenous population have converted to Islam. There is a small risk that international extremists may exploit this peaceful Islamic conversion in Mexico and radicalise the revolutionary elements in **Chiapas**.

Response Preparedness: Adequate medical and emergency facilities are in place in **Mexico City** and other major hubs; outside of major urban centres, facilities are limited and lacking in resources. The Mexican Government and military are continuously stepping up their counter-terrorism capabilities and currently have a strong partnership with similar US agencies.

There are no recent incidents

Unrest : ● Moderate Risk

Protests and Demonstrations: There are frequent localised protests and large-scale marches in **Mexico City**, with related traffic disruptions, while outside of the capital demonstrations are held periodically in urban centres. Rural protests are largely concentrated in **Guerrero, Oaxaca** and **Chiapas states**, with roadblocks on arterial highways common. Most civil unrest is tied to local land disputes and Mexican law enforcement officials are generally reluctant to intervene.

Foreign nationals are prohibited from participating in political protests, street demonstrations, or other types of public gatherings with a clear political agenda. Foreign nationals found to be contravening this law can face expulsion or detention for up to 10 years. Visitors are strongly advised to avoid large crowds and protests.

Annual Protests: Annual protests are held nationwide by students, members of the dissident CNTE teachers' union and their supporters across Mexico, in protest of the 26 September 2014 disappearance, and alleged massacre, of 43 college students in **Iguala, Guerrero state**. The CNTE members frequently rally across urban hubs, while protests against gender-based violence also gather considerable crowds and potential for disruption and clashes, especially in **Mexico City** and **Guadalajara**.

Violent Unrest: Violent protests are not common in Mexico but do occur from time to time. While the majority of demonstrations remain peaceful, especially in **Mexico City**, the potential for unrest to escalate into violence is more likely when student protestors or activists demonstrating against gender-based violence are involved. Such clashes between riot police and demonstrators have also occurred in **Oaxaca City, Cancún** and other urban hubs. Protests in support of individuals detained on drug trafficking charges or vigilantism are especially likely to result in violence as armed supporters of those held will surround police stations and other public buildings to demand the release of the detainees, even resorting to hostage-taking.

Sports-related Riots: Unlike other countries in the region and in Europe, football hooliganism is not as overt, widespread or organised in Mexico. However, small-scale fights regularly occur, usually during matches in the stadium. The football clubs with the strongest rivalries include: América and Cruz Azul; América and Guadalajara; América and U.N.A.M.; Atlas and Guadalajara; and Monterrey and Tigres UANL. There is a history of violence breaking out during derbies between the above-mentioned teams due to the staunch support and large fan base. Although travellers are generally

not targeted for fighting, there is a risk that violence may spill over. If you do attend a football match keep clear of any rowdy gathering crowds and those heavily under the influence of alcohol. Be sure to monitor local news reports closely to find out times and locations of football matches. Avoid loitering near the stadium before or after the game. Violent unrest can also erupt during victory celebrations, which usually centre on the **Ángel de la Independencia** monument in the capital.

Recent incidents

22 September 2023 - 23 September 2023

● **Moderate risk: Several protests planned in Mexico City**

Several protests are planned in Mexico City, including at Periférico Sur near Zapote from 09:00 local time (15:00 GMT), Calz. de Hueso 729, Av. Río Churubusco 1418, Av. Aquiles Serdán 2060, Calz. de la Viga 54, Blvd. de las Cataratas 3, Av. Lomas de Plateros and Av. Insurgentes Norte 1698 from 11:00, Av. Insurgentes Sur at Calz. Manuel Villalongín from 12:00, Circuito Bicipuma 3000 from 13:00, Plaza de la Constitución from 15:00 and Av. México Coyoacán 343 from 17:00, among others.

21 September 2023 - 22 September 2023

● **Moderate risk: Several protests planned in Mexico City**

Several protests are planned in Mexico City throughout the day, including at Av. Miguel Ángel de Quevedo near Av. División del Norte from 08:30 local time (14:30 GMT), Av. Paseo de la Reforma 211 from 10:00, Av. Insurgentes Sur at Calz. Manuel Villalongín from 12:00, Circuito Bicipuma 3000 from 13:00, Av. Insurgentes Sur 3000 from 15:00, Av. Insurgentes Norte 98 and Abraham González 48 from 17:00 and Av. Insurgentes Sur 20 during the day.

19 September 2023 - 20 September 2023

● **Moderate risk: CNTE teachers from Michoacán to rally in Mexico City on 19 September**

Members of the Section XVIII of the National Coordinator of Education Workers (CNTE) plan to travel by 50 buses from Morelia in Michoacán to Mexico City to hold a sit-in protest and occupy the State Secretariat of Education facilities in the capital on 19 September, to demand improvements in education infrastructure and working conditions, among other.

19 September 2023 - 20 September 2023

● **Moderate risk: Several protests planned in Mexico City**

Several protests are planned in Mexico City throughout the day, including at Donceles near Allende and San Lorenzo 290 from 09:00 local time (15:00 GMT), Av. H. Congreso de la Unión 66 from 10:00, Av. Insurgentes Sur at Calz. Manuel Villalongín and Plaza de la Constitución from 12:00, Calz. Ticomán 55 from 15:00, Añil at Av. Río Churubusco towards Av. de los Compositores from 20:00 and Calz. San Antonio Abad at José Joaquín Arriaga during the day, among others.

Crime : ● High Risk

Violent Crime: Armed robbery, sexual assault and kidnapping are not uncommon in areas frequented by tourists. Only one out of every ten crimes is reported in Mexico, and less than two percent of suspects ever get convicted. Mexico has one of the world's highest murder rates; although the homicide rate has decreased in recent years, over 30,968 murders were recorded nationwide in 2022.

Five of the 10 most dangerous cities in the world are in Mexico, with **Tijuana (Baja California)** in the first place followed by **Acapulco (Guerrero)**, **Ciudad Victoria (Tamaulipas)**, **Ciudad Juárez (Chihuahua)** and **Irapuato (Guanajuato)**. In 2022, **Zacatecas, Baja California, Colima, Chihuahua, Guanajuato** and **Sonora** reported the highest homicide rates, ranging from 109 to 70 per 100,000 people. **Colima** and **Monterrey** had the highest rates of femicides in 2022. Lowest rates of violent crime are found in **Baja California Sur, Campeche** and **Yucatán**.

Political Crime: Political violence generally increases in the run-up to elections. Political violence was particularly present in **Sinaloa, México State, Guerrero, Michoacán, Guanajuato, Veracruz** and **San Luis Potosí**, during the 2020-2021 election period, with over 690 candidates and party members killed nationwide – a 68 percent increase compared to the 2017-2018 election period. A related increase can be expected ahead of the 2024 general elections.

Petty Crime: The most common type of crime travellers will likely face in Mexico is petty crime, including pickpocketing, bag-snatching, and other forms of robbery from hotel rooms or on the street. Such crimes occur most commonly in busy areas, including on public transport and near currency exchanges, ATMs, hotels, restaurants and nightclubs. Theft on buses is a common occurrence at night in Mexican cities, predominantly **Mexico City**. Travellers have also reported being robbed by taxi drivers in **Mexico City**. Ensure you only use licensed taxis.

Mexico City has high levels of petty and violent crime, particularly in poorer periphery neighbourhoods. Heightened vigilance should be exercised in central parts of the city, including around **Plaza Garibaldi**, the **Basilica of Guadalupe**, the **Merced market** and **Tepito** as well as areas surrounding **Benito Juárez International Airport (MEX/MMMX)** and all major bus terminals.

In **Guadalajara**, eastern parts of the city as well as multiple neighbourhoods in the surrounding **Zapopan, Tlaquepaque, Tonalá** and **Tlajomulco municipalities**,

including city centres, are also considered high-risk.

In **Monterrey**, the areas of **Independencia**, **Río Nazas**, **Apodaca** and **General Mariano Escobedo** are considered high risk due to constant reports of criminal activity and should be avoided along with out-lying suburbs and districts.

Petty criminals often work in pairs and groups, including with children, where one assailant distracts the victim by asking a question, while another grabs the victim's bag and runs off. Travellers should secure bags with a strap across the chest from the shoulder to the front of the opposite hip. Keep valuables such as mobile phones, jewellery and wallets out of sight. Always leave your valuables in a locked hotel room safe, rather than carry them with you. Travellers should be especially vigilant regarding laptop bags, and avoid putting bags containing valuables on the ground. Similarly, do not leave coats or handbags hanging on the backs of chairs while in restaurants.

Hundreds of robberies take place annually along roads and highways. The area north and east of **Mexico City**, south of **San Luis Potosí** and around **Querétaro** have the most crime-ridden roads, with the **Querétaro-Irapuato** and **Querétaro-San Luis Potosí highways** and two sections of **Highway 150D: Mexico City-Puebla** and **Puebla-Córdoba** among the roads most threatened by robberies.

Black Markets: At least 90 percent of the cocaine consumed in the US flows through Mexico, creating a multi-billion dollar black market in the country. Drugs, such as cocaine, heroin, methamphetamines, and marijuana, are moved north, while high-powered assault rifles, pistols, and ammunition are moved south to Mexico. The existence of these markets has created a number of organised criminal syndicates that together represent the source of violent crime in Mexico and the country's number one threat to national security.

Car Theft: Car theft is a major problem in cities along the **US-Mexico border** and in **Mexico City** and **Monterrey**. Approximately 60,000 vehicles are stolen annually in Mexico. Many of the stolen cars are often driven to Central America, where they are disassembled and sold for parts. If driving a rental car in Mexico, be sure not to leave it in an unlit or insecure area overnight. Cars left along the side of the road are also targeted. If possible, keep rental cars in well-lit areas, parking garages, or in areas guarded by 24-hour security.

Drug-related Crime: Criminal gang activity and drug gang-related crime are common throughout Mexico. Drug trafficking is particularly rife in states along the **Mexico-US border** in **Nuevo Laredo**, **Tijuana**, **Ciudad Juárez**, **Nogales**, **Reynosa**, **Matamoros**,

as well as in **Acapulco** and **Morelia**. **Mexico City** and the surrounding urban area in **México State** also report a high number of drug-related crimes and kidnappings. Tourist locations are also not immune, with violent criminal activity frequently reported in **Mazatlan** in **Sinaloa**, **Puerto Vallarta** in **Jalisco**, **Los Cabos** and **La Paz** in **Baja California Sur** and in **Cancún**, **Playa del Carmen** and **Tulum** in **Riviera Maya** in **Quintana Roo**. The violence is uncontrolled and has injured and killed innocent bystanders. However, it is for the most part confined to those involved in the drug trade. Despite Mexican authorities implementing new security strategies, Mexican security forces and police have been ineffective in maintaining security in cities along the **US-Mexico border**. Many police officers have been corrupted and are working for the drug cartels as enforcers, bodyguards and mules.

Although the organisation still retains its reputation for brutality and public displays of violence, Los Zetas, a former paramilitary division of the now fractured Gulf Cartel (Cártel del Golfo), has faced significant territorial losses in recent years while undergoing a process of violent fragmentation. The Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG) has rapidly climbed to the top of the cartel chain and is considered the most notoriously violent of all current cartel groups, given their propensity for militant tactics. Once used as the Sinaloa Cartel's armed wing to battle the Zetas in **Jalisco**, the CJNG has been behind some of the deadliest massacres, including the ambush killing of 15 police officers and the shooting down of a military helicopter in 2015. The group is reported to operate in at least 28 of Mexico's 32 states, while maintaining contacts in Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Central America and the US.

Splintering cartel groups, proxy wars carried out by associated street gangs, turf battles sparked by the expansion of the CJNG and greater demand for drugs have all fueled this violence that led to 2019 ending as the bloodiest year since the early 1990s. Turf battles are being fought between the CJNG and Sinaloa cartels, often allied with or acting through local gangs, particularly in **Guanajuato**, **Baja California**, **Michoacán**, **Zacatecas**, **Chihuahua** and **Sonora states**.

Organised Crime: As government strategies continue to take aim at weakening the major Mexican drug cartels, there has been a recent proliferation of hundreds of smaller crime groups, which have abstained from the drug trade in favour of extortion, major theft and abductions, including in **Baja California**, **Chihuahua**, **Coahuila**, **Colima**, **Durango**, **Guanajuato**, **Guerrero**, **Jalisco**, **Michoacán**, **Nuevo León**, **Sonora**, **Sinaloa**, **Tamaulipas**, **Veracruz** and **Zacatecas**. The dismantling of historically larger cartels has opened up power vacuums at the local level, such as in the case of **Guerrero state**, where criminal outfit Guerreros Unidos arose following the demise of

the once powerful Beltrán Leyva cartel and where the Rojos, Ardillos and Sierra del Sur gangs have been locked in a deadly turf war battle in the central interior of the state. With a weakened institutional system, predominantly corrupt policing apparatus and lack of cartel power, these smaller organised crime units have taken control of whole municipalities with ease, and often with the help of local officials.

Kidnapping: Mexico has one of the highest kidnapping rates in the Americas. The annual figures of abductions have oscillated between 1,300 and 1,400 cases in the past several years. However, many civic organisations claim these numbers are likely to grossly underrepresent the crime in a country where conservative estimates place the percentage of kidnappings that are actually reported at only about 25 percent of the total. Public trust in the police force is inherently linked to levels of reported kidnappings, which may in turn enforce criminals' perception that kidnapping is a low-risk business with high rewards. The surge in kidnappings has, in part, been attributed to the atomisation of the country's major cartel groups.

The sophistication of the crime varies, but it appears to be disproportionately initiated by drug cartels and street gangs. The states of **Morelos, Chihuahua, Zacatecas, Veracruz** and **Oaxaca** accounted for the highest abduction rates in 2022.

The frequency of 'mass kidnappings' has also increased in recent years. Smaller criminal elements and local gangs often employ such tactics, particularly in suburban settings, and often target bars and nightclubs for victims. The ability of these lesser-known groups to abduct a large group of people from a public space highlights the presence of organised criminal networks and their ability to carry out abductions with relative ease. While many Mexican citizens are kidnapped on a regular basis, it is rare for foreign nationals, particularly tourists, to be abducted for long periods of time. Those that are kidnapped for ransom are almost always high-ranking executives with well-known international companies operating in Mexico, especially along the **US-Mexico border**. However, on 3 March 2023, four US nationals were kidnapped in **Matamoros, Tamaulipas**, by suspected Gulf Cartel gunmen who likely mistook the Americans for Haitian drug-traffickers or smugglers. The victims were found several days later; two had been killed and one injured.

A boom in 'express kidnappings' - short-term abductions aimed at extracting cash from the victim - on the other hand, has democratised the crime in Mexico, and kidnappers now target people from all levels of society as well as foreign nationals and tourists. Victims often report having been assaulted, though fatalities are rare. Virtual kidnappings, or telephone-extortion-by-deception schemes, are on the rise

nationwide. Never provide personal information to someone who calls or approaches you, and do not post personal information on social networking sites.

Specialized Units in Combating Kidnapping (UECS) work in all 32 states. However, kidnappers often could not operate without the direct and indirect assistance of corrupted police agencies. In other cases, police officers themselves participate in the abduction of someone in their custody or while ransom is being paid. Some police officers act as "kidnapping managers", working hand-in-hand with a gang, identifying potential victims or allowing criminals to operate freely.

Visitors are strongly advised to maintain a low profile, vary routines regularly and ensure privacy of travel itineraries. Consider contracting a security escort in high-risk states. Always prefer radio taxis to those hailed off the street in commonly targeted Mexican cities (request that the driver call his/her dispatcher to confirm your name before entering the vehicle). Though determined kidnappers may stage attacks in spite of these precautions, advanced security measures are likely to discourage opportunists.

Piracy: Armed criminal groups have targeted and robbed commercial vessels, oil platforms and offshore supply vessels in the past in the **Bay of Campeche**, off the coast of **Tabasco, Veracruz and Yucatán states** in the southern **Gulf of Mexico**, with dozens of attacks taking place annually. Despite the increase in attacks, little proactive response has been seen from the authorities or companies involved, and little is known about the pirates. No ties have been found to larger criminal groups, however. The naval or coast guard response to these attacks has been delayed. As such, all vessels are advised to increase security conditions and prepare to be self-sufficient in their security. This includes following the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) recommendations for transiting high-risk areas and ensuring they have access to updated HF emergency frequencies from the US Coast Guard to broadcast mayday calls in the event of pirate sightings and attacks.

Credit Card Fraud: Credit card fraud is common around the region. In Mexico, even the best restaurants may steal your credit card number for later use. The best way to avoid this occurrence is two-fold: inform your bank about travel plans, providing your departure and return dates, and never let your credit card leave your line of sight. Many upscale restaurants will have a wireless sales point that can be brought to your table. If unavailable, try paying with cash, a traveller's cheque, or walk to the sales point and deliver your credit card in person. Always use automated teller machines (ATMs) with caution and be aware of your surroundings. Thieves will often target ATMs

waiting for an individual to use one. Once the individual has taken out their ATM card, the thief will appear and demand large sums of money. Try to only use ATMs in banks and never at night, even in crowded areas.

Identity Theft: Mexico does not stand apart as a country with particularly high levels of identity theft, but it does happen. In most cases, identities stolen from US citizens are used by illegal immigrants when they are deported, especially criminal deportees. This way, they are able to avoid scrutiny when arriving in their home country.

Scams: Both locals and foreign nationals are victimised by phone and email extortion scams. Scam artists posing as hit men have been calling and emailing individuals threatening violence against families in order to coerce money. According to Mexico's Office of Public Safety, an estimated 300 foreign visitors fall prey to phone extortion scams throughout the country every year. It is important to remember that such calls and emails do not necessarily pose a real threat of violence. Gangs will typically hit a target without giving warning to the victim's family. Also, ransom demands are generally settled after the victim has been kidnapped, not prior to any crime.

Weapons Possession: Possession of firearms without a license is illegal in Mexico. Foreign visitors should avoid carrying firearms while in Mexico at all times. Despite restrictions, firearm ownership is on the rise in Mexico as perceptions of a declining security situation push many to obtain illegal weapons, mostly pistols. Consequently, muggings and assaults with pistols, rather than knives, are on the rise.

Human Trafficking: Human trafficking is common in Mexico. Beginning in the southern city of **Tapachula**, human smugglers use both land and sea routes to move their captives north from the **Mexico-Guatemala border**, crossing into the US usually in eastern Texas, Arizona or California. While this crime is prevalent throughout the country, it is highly unlikely that foreign visitors will come in contact with it.

Money Laundering: Money laundering is largely a silent business and will not directly affect foreign nationals. Some money exchange companies, such as Ribadeo Casas de Cambio, have been found to be deeply involved in transnational money laundering schemes, but this company's customers are rarely, if ever, found to be directly involved in the business.

Recent incidents

22 September 2023 - 23 September 2023

● **Medium risk: Criminals set ablaze vehicles around Cárdenas, Tabasco state**

Local media reported that traffic was disrupted around Cárdenas in Tabasco during morning hours local time, when suspected members of organised crime groups set ablaze vehicles, including on Villahermosa, Comalcalco, Huimanguillo and Coatzacoalcos highways. Armed individuals also fired at the house of the Civil Protection coordinator in El Toloque, Cárdenas. There were no reports of casualties.

20 September 2023 - 22 September 2023

● **Medium risk: Insecurity prompts disruptions in and around Motozintla, Chiapas**

Local media reported that armed convoys were reported on a road between Madero and Motozintla in Chiapas state, overnight on 20-21 September, amid warnings issued by armed groups, including the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG). Traffic was also cut at Kilometre mark 61+200 on Motozintla-Ciudad Cuauhtémoc section, while locals reported shortages of basic amenities amid shop closures due to insecurity.

18 September 2023 - 19 September 2023

● **Medium risk: Security forces clash with gunmen in Reynosa, Tamaulipas state**

Local media reported that at least one person was killed following a vehicle chase that ended with a crash at Bodega Aurrerá store in Reynosa, Tamaulipas state, during early morning hours local time amid armed clashes between organised crime groups and security forces in several parts of the city, including San Valentín and Fracc. Balcones de Alcalá neighbourhoods. At least two criminals were arrested.

15 September 2023 - 16 September 2023

● **Medium risk:** Deadly shooting reported in Teocaltiche municipality, Jalisco state

Local media reported that at least four people were killed and one other was injured when unidentified gunmen opened fire at a bar in Maravillas, Teocaltiche municipality, Jalisco state, during evening hours local time on 15 September.

Law

Overview

Mexico has a legal system that comprises United States constitutional theory, civil law, and judicial review of legislative acts. Lower levels of the courts are widely believed to be corrupt and are generally inefficient; according to Mexico's national statistics institute, only two percent of the homicides result in a court sentence.

Traffic Infractions and Speeding: Drivers, including those of vehicles that are rented or borrowed, can be arrested for any illegal items or substances found within the car. It is common to be pulled over for speeding, even if you are not. This is a common ploy to extort by force foreign nationals. Mexican law requires that only owners drive their vehicles, or that the owner be inside the vehicle. If not, the vehicle may be seized by Mexican customs and will not be returned under any circumstances.

Although laws and their enforcement will tend to vary between states there are some general advisories. Speed limits in Mexico are generally 100kph (62mph) on highways and between 40kph (24mph) and 60kph (37mph) in urban zones. Fines for going over the limit will usually be at least MXN336 (approximately USD25). Children under the age of five are prohibited from sitting in the front. Drivers must wear a seatbelt and it is recommended that all passengers do the same.

Drugs and Alcohol: The legal drinking age in Mexico is 18 years or older, but this law is not strictly enforced. In many places the consumption of alcohol in public ('open container'), unless in a licensed restaurant, café, or bar, is illegal and usually punishable by a day in jail. The legal limit for driving is 0.08 milligrams of alcohol per millilitre of blood. If caught penalties include fines of at least MXN2,100 (approximately USD160), arrest, and possible imprisonment.

The penalty for drug-related crimes, including driving under the influence of alcohol, is severe, and those caught and convicted of drug crimes can face up to 25 years in prison. The purchase of controlled medication requires a prescription from a licensed Mexican physician. In the past, Mexican doctors have been arrested for writing prescriptions without due cause. In those instances, foreign nationals who bought the medications have been held in jail for months waiting for the Mexican judicial system to decide their fate.

Smoking Laws: In April 2008, a nationwide law banned smoking in indoor workplaces

and enclosed public spaces such as offices, schools, hospitals and on public transport. Smoking in bars and restaurants will only be permitted in separate rooms or on open-air terraces. Authorities will place fines on establishments that breach the ban, and could subject smokers caught illicitly smoking to up to 36 hours in jail.

Sexual Solicitation: The Mexican Government has announced an aggressive program to discourage sexual tourism and to severely punish those who engage in sexual activity with minors. Soliciting the services of a minor for sexual purposes is illegal in Mexico, and is punishable by imprisonment.

Demonstrations: The Mexican Constitution prohibits political activities by foreign nationals, and such actions may result in detention and/or deportation. Travellers should avoid political demonstrations and other activities that might be deemed political by the Mexican authorities. Even demonstrations intended to be peaceful can turn confrontational and escalate into violence.

Importing and Exporting Goods: Mexican customs authorities enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export from Mexico of items such as trucks and autos, trailers, antiquities, medications, medical equipment, and business equipment. Prior to travelling, contact your local Mexican Embassy for specific information regarding customs requirements.

The possession of Mexican archaeological artefacts is prohibited and punishable by law. Individuals attempting to export such goods will face heavy fines and/or jail time. When travelling with art or archaeological replicas, it is important to carry documents that certify this condition.

Weapons Possession: Entering Mexico with a firearm, certain types of knives or even a single round of ammunition is illegal, even if the weapon or ammunition is taken into Mexico unintentionally. The Mexican Government strictly enforces its laws restricting the entry of firearms and ammunition along all land borders and at airports and seaports. Violations have resulted in arrests, convictions, and long prison sentences for foreign nationals.

Corruption

Overview

Transparency Mexico, the local chapter of Transparency International, estimates that there is a total of 214 million "acts of corruption" in the use of public services every year, and adds that 6.9 percent of household income goes towards that end.

Corruption became pervasive during the seven decades of rule by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which briefly lost its hold on power at the national level with Vicente Fox's victory in 2000 and Felipe Calderón's win in 2006. Mexico has a long tradition of corrupt practices, which are firmly rooted in the country's systems and structures. Rooting out corruption is a main emphasis for President López Obrador during his term. Investigations are underway over the so-called "Master Fraud" involving over 50 government officials channelling public money through universities to phantom companies. Countless cases of bribery, extortion, fraud, kickbacks, nepotism, and unexplained wealth routinely attend the upper echelons of the government pyramid. The fallout from an investigation into the 26 September 2014 mass kidnapping of 43 student teachers in **Iguala, Guerrero state**, which uncovered the routine use of cartel members as auxiliary manpower by police and city officials, prompted then-president Peña Nieto to issue a series of constitutional and security reforms intended to stem the infiltration of organised crime into municipalities. In August 2020, prosecutors opened a corruption investigation against Peña Nieto, after Emilio Lozoya, the ex-head of the state petrol company PEMEX, accused the former president of taking millions of dollars in bribes from Odebrecht into the 2012 presidential election campaign and bribing members of parliament to ensure the passage of a crucial energy reform bill.

Travellers: Travellers are likely to encounter corruption in Mexico's public service sector, particularly by police officers and border guards who will try to extort a mordida (literally 'a bite'), which is Mexican slang for a bribe. The traditional mordida refers to small payments to police in exchange for overlooking both real and bogus traffic violations. Bribes should not be directly offered to an official, as it is illegal and could result in more trouble. Some visitors, however, find it more convenient to spend a small sum if alluded to rather than be harassed by the police.

Residents: Residents are likely to be affected by the same low-level bribery as travelling foreign nationals. This may include the same fictitious violations of traffic

rules. Residents of Mexico, however, are more likely to experience corruption in bureaucratic processes.

Business: Corruption also permeates Mexico's business sector, as many companies bribe government officials to avoid labour and environmental penalties, obtain a faster connection to public services, influence the drafting of bills and regulations, and to win privileges of one kind or another, especially government contracts. In 2016, the government estimated that corrupt activities' occurred in 1,157 cases out of every 10,000 import and export procedures. Earlier in 2013, it was reported that Mexican customs agents at **Tijuana's El Chaparral border crossing** in **Baja California state** were regularly extorting import-export businesses for hundreds of US dollars. To combat smuggling and corruptions, in May 2021, the government announced a MXN 50 billion trust fund for infrastructure and technology improvements at the country's customs. Furthermore, business extortion in **Mexico City** increased by 127 percent during the January-March in 2019 in comparison to the same time period in 2018, mainly due to the diversification of local criminal groups, primarily the Unión de Tepito. Nationwide, a 58 percent increase from 2017 to 2019 was reported.

Security Services

Overview

Mexico has 395,000 police officers operating at the federal, state and municipal levels. Police forces at the state and municipal levels are of a preventive nature and lack many of the powers their federal counterparts possess, including investigatory powers.

Corruption is historically pervasive within all levels of Mexico's policing apparatus, with presidents in the last two decades attempting to overhaul the system. Under former president Felipe Calderón (2006-2012), the Federal Police (FP) replaced the Federal Preventive Police (PFP) and the Ministerial Federal Police (PFM) replaced the Federal Agency of Investigation (AFI), which had itself replaced the corrupt Federal Judicial Police under previous president Vicente Fox. Former president Calderón proposed reforms at the federal level, and in 2012 issued a proposal to amend the Mexican Constitution and overhaul the country's police system by eliminating 2,000 municipal departments. Police duties in towns and cities would be taken over by state police forces; the move, aimed at creating ease to oversee professionalisation and rooting out graft, was largely rebuffed by municipal and town officials.

Former president Enrique Peña Nieto made similar efforts. In November 2014 he proposed constitutional reforms to root out corruption within lower level policing units: the first to create single police forces in the country's 32 states, the second to combat the infiltration of organised crime in municipalities and the third to define the responsibilities and jurisdictions of all authorities in the fight against crime. His attempt was also unsuccessful as he faced opposition from municipal and town officials. In January 2016, members of congress led by the PRI suggested to modify his proposal and create instead a mixed command to appease municipal authorities. However, the 1 July 2017 deadline for such proposal was missed, with opposition members accusing the PRI of boycotting its own initiative.

The congress approved President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's National Guard - a hybrid institution with military organization and discipline, but functioning under the command of the Ministry of Public Security of a civil nature - in January 2019 to prevent and combat crime across all 32 states from June 2019. The Federal Police was dissolved into the National Guard, and approximately 43,000 elements of the Federal Police, Military Police and Naval Police were incorporated into the new, 80,000 strong

force. Federal police officers who reject the conditions of their incorporation into the National Guard protested in the capital in July 2020.

Efficiency: Corruption permeates Mexico's police at all levels, particularly at the municipal and state levels where they are poorly paid. The National Guard tends to be better funded, less corrupt and more efficient, but their involvement in federal-level crimes creates a situation whereby state and municipal level crimes are often not investigated and go unpunished.

Professionalism: The National Guard is more professional, better trained and equipped than their colleagues at the municipal level. Foreign nationals will most likely run into police on Mexican roadways, where rental cars are easy to spot. It is very common for police to pull over rental cars and cite a traffic violation, usually speeding. This event almost always leads to a situation where the foreign national either offers to deal with the problem on the spot by offering a bribe, or offering to pay the ticket, or the car being confiscated and taken to the nearest police station. Since officers are interested in bribes, they will make any other option unpalatable. While bribing police officers is illegal, some visitors have found it the best option for avoiding what could otherwise be a very unpleasant experience.

Areas Active: The largest number of working officers per 100,000 inhabitants is found in **Mexico City** followed by the states of **Yucatán** and **Tabasco**. However high police presence is not necessarily an indicator of low insecurity levels; as many as 30,000 officers in Mexico have failed corresponding tests and are deemed untrustworthy. In 2020, **Guerrero**, **Zacatecas** and **Tabasco** were the states where most police officers were dismissed. Furthermore, over 650 municipalities in Mexico go unpoliced with no security forces operating within the area.

Force Strength: There are approximately 395,000 public security agents operating at the federal, state, and municipal levels in Mexico. These officers are divided into three levels: federal, state and municipal.

Abuses/Miscarriages of Justice: Though the majority of cases go unreported, corruption in Mexican policing is thought to be endemic. Travellers regularly report small sums stolen in police custody and many are directly solicited for small bribes.

Federal officials contend that municipal police departments, whose officers are poorly paid, trained and equipped, have been infiltrated by drug traffickers who pay crooked officers to tip-off drug lords and moonlight as hitmen. The problem is considered the worst at the local level, where fear or low wages prompt many officers to help drug

gangs. State and local forces account for the vast majority of Mexico's 395,000 police officers. However, residents of several indigenous, Afro-Mexican and mestizo settlements in the country are often subject to intimidation and abuse of authority by the Mexican army, the former Federal Police and state (police).

Former President Felipe Calderon's administration launched a number of operations targeting corruption in Mexico's security forces. Police standards which took effect in May 2010 were aimed at cleaning up the country's graft-plagued police force through lie detector tests, financial disclosure statements and drug testing. The government has sought to improve the calibre of federal officers by boosting wages and requiring that recruits have college degrees. However, improvement remained elusive under former President Peña Nieto. Over 9,000 torture cases were reported from 2012 to 2018. According to the UN Committee Against Torture, in 2016, out of 3,214 torture complaints, only eight resulted in an arrest and trial. It is widely accepted that the actual number of cases of any particular crime is much higher than reported, as crimes are frequently underreported due to fear and intimidation against victims and their families. The creation of the National Guard was partly justified by President Andrés Manuel López Obrador to fight corruption in police forces. Entire municipal police forces have been suspended, including in **Madera, Chihuahua**, and **Tehuacán, Puebla**, in August 2018 and August 2019, respectively, for alleged corruption and collusion with organized crime.

Emergency Contact: In the event of an emergency, police in Mexico can be reached by dialling telephone number 911.

Natural Risks : ● Medium Risk

As the fourth largest country in the Americas, Mexico is exposed to a variety of natural phenomena on a regional basis: earthquakes and volcanic activity in the **central** and **southern states**, hurricanes on the **Pacific** and **Gulf of Mexico coastlines**, flooding in the **southeastern states**, and drought in the **northern states**. The country's critical infrastructure is not fully capable of withstanding major environmental calamities.

Hurricanes/Typhoons/Tropical Cyclones

A cyclone/typhoon/hurricane is essentially a large mass of air that spirals around a low-pressure centre. It is an organised collection of thunderstorms embedded in a swirling mass of air. This mass of air is called a cyclone if it forms in the Indian or South Pacific oceans, a typhoon if formed in the West Pacific Ocean and a hurricane if formed in the East Pacific and Atlantic oceans. Cyclones/typhoons/hurricanes normally bring gale-force winds, heavy rainfall and high tides, with the potential of causing significant or destructive damage and widespread travel disruptions.

The country is periodically affected by the hurricane and storm season, which usually occur between June and November, on both coasts. **Pacific coast** hurricanes tend to be both less violent and less frequent than those on the **Caribbean** and **Gulf of Mexico coastlines**, which are struck several times every year. One of the most powerful storms to hit Mexico was Category 5 Hurricane Patricia in 2015; the storm damaged thousands homes in **Jalisco state**, left around over 0.25 million people without power supply and triggered evacuations across 21 states. However, the timely evacuations minimised loss of life, highlighting the effectiveness of emergency services in the country.

Follow local radio or television broadcasts for information and evacuation instructions. If not under an area with mandatory evacuation orders, remain indoors. Locate and secure important documentation, including passports, photo identification, travel permits and any indispensable personal effects. Be advised that the calm 'eye' is deceptive and should by no means be interpreted as a sign that the storm has passed. The second winds are likely to be worse and may destroy trees and buildings damaged in the first pass. If caught in a region hit by a cyclone/typhoon/hurricane, remain indoors until the storm passes. If there is a need to move to an evacuation centre,

evacuate in a calm manner and ensure you carry important personal identification. Avoid all low-lying coastal areas due to storm surges. Confirm the viability of overland travel routes due to the risk of flooding. Air and sea travel are also likely to be impacted. Anticipate disruptions to power, communications and other essential services.

Flooding

A flood is an overflow of water that submerges land that is usually dry. It is normally triggered by an extended period of heavy rainfall and can be exacerbated by poor drainage systems in the affected area.

The rainy season in Mexico runs from May to October which partly coincides with the hurricane season, during which heavy rains can result in flash flooding. Widespread flooding usually occurs in areas with poor drainage systems in the northern and southern parts of the country, particularly in **Chiapas, Guerrero, Coahuila, Tabasco** and **Oaxaca states**. Government infrastructure projects have also failed to prevent yearly flooding in places like **Tabasco, Chiapas** and **Veracruz** where, in 2020, floods killed more than 28 people and displaced 368,000 others.

If instructed of the possibility that flash-flooding may affect the area you are in, monitor local updates and move immediately to higher ground away from rivers, streams, creeks and storm drains. Though flash-flooding is commonly attributable to excess upstream precipitation, be aware that flooding can occur without typical warning signs of rain clouds or heavy rain. This is especially true near streams, drainage channels, canyons and other areas known to flood suddenly. If you happen across a flooded road in your car, turn around and drive in the opposite direction. When trapped on a flooded road, vacate your vehicle immediately and climb to higher ground.

Landslides/Mudslides

Sometimes referred to as debris flows, mudflows, lahars or debris avalanches, landslides/mudslides are a form of mass soil movement that tends to flow in channels in a surge of water-saturated rock, earth and debris, typically following heavy rainfall.

Landslides and mudflows usually occur in hilly areas with weak infrastructure and loose soil in the aftermath of heavy rains. Areas frequently prone to landslides and mudflows include northern and eastern parts of **Mexico City**, as well as mountainous regions in **Veracruz, Guerrero** and **Oaxaca states**. These incidents tend to cause prolonged roadblocks and often delay rescue operations in the affected areas. The country does not have an effective landslides and mudflows warning mechanism.

Follow local news updates in landslide prone areas for warnings about intense storms and rainfall. If landslide or debris flow danger is imminent, quickly move away from the path of the slide. Seek shelter on the nearest high ground in a direction away from the path. If rocks and debris are approaching, run for the nearest shelter and take cover (if possible, under a desk, table or other piece of sturdy furniture that can provide you with air space if the building collapses). Anticipate disruptions to overland travel in areas affected by landslides. Confirm the viability of intended overland travel routes before departure and remain alert for landslide warning signs including cracks in the soil or the faint rumbling sound of an approaching landslide or debris flow.

Earthquakes

An earthquake is the sudden, rapid shaking of the earth, caused by the breaking and shifting of subterranean rock as it releases strain that has accumulated over a long period. Initial mild shaking may worsen and become extremely violent within a matter of seconds. Additional earthquakes, called aftershocks, may follow the initial earthquake.

Mexico periodically experiences shallow earthquakes and tremors which can cause widespread disruptions and fatalities. The southern coast is the most vulnerable as is western Mexico which lays on a slip fault extension of the San Andreas Fault. In 2017, a 7.1-magnitude quake that hit **Puebla state** left over 300 people dead in **Mexico City, Puebla** and **Morelos states**; the quake caused severe and prolonged damage to roads, buildings and utilities.

When shaking begins, drop to the ground and take cover under, and hold on to, a sturdy piece of furniture, such as a heavy desk or table that can provide you with air space if the building collapses. If you're not near a strong piece of furniture, crouch

down and protect your head and face in an inner corner of a building; only stand in a doorway if you know it is strongly supported. Stay away from windows or glass panels. Most deaths and injuries in an earthquake are caused by collapsing building materials and heavy falling objects. Stay indoors until the tremors stop and you are sure it is safe to exit. Avoid all areas in the vicinity of outer walls and doorways, as these are most prone to falling debris. In a high-rise building, the electricity may go out and the sprinkler systems may come on. Do not use the elevators. If the lights go out, avoid using candles, matches or lighters during or after the earthquake; if there is a gas leak, an explosion could result. If outdoors, move to an open space away from buildings, electric poles and street lights which are prone to collapse. Do not travel on roads and bridges which may have been damaged by the earthquake. Be prepared for secondary earth movements that follow the initial earthquake; some of these may be large enough to cause additional damage or bring down weakened structures.

Tsunami

Tsunamis are commonly generated by an earthquake-induced movement of the ocean floor. A strong earthquake lasting 20 seconds or more near the coast is likely to generate a tsunami and imminent coastal impact, possibly before warnings can be issued. However, all offshore or coastal earthquakes carry the potential of generating tsunamis. Warning signs of a tsunami include a sudden rise and fall in coastal sea levels.

Shallow strong tremors in the Pacific and the Caribbean have the potential to trigger potentially hazardous tsunami waves in coastal areas of Mexico. Tsunami warnings are issued by the US Tsunami Warning Centre. However, there have been no major tsunamis in coastal areas of Mexico in recent years.

In areas at risk of tsunamis, know the height of your street above sea level and the distance of your street from the coast or other at-risk waters. Areas which are less than 7.5 metres (25 feet) above sea level and/or within 1.5 kilometres (one mile) of the coastline are perceived to be the most at risk. Evacuation orders may be based on these numbers. Immediately move inland or to higher ground in the event of a tsunami alert/warning; stay away from the beach. In the absence of an official warning, if you are on the coast and feel an earthquake, or if there is a noticeable recession in water away from the shoreline this is a natural warning of a possible tsunami and should be heeded; move away immediately. Remain out of the tsunami hazard zone

until local officials advise otherwise.

Drought

A drought is a period of below-average precipitation in a given region, resulting in prolonged shortages in the water supply. Droughts can have a substantial impact on the agriculture and ecosystem of the respective region, triggering food shortages as well. Extended periods of drought may contribute to social unrest, malnutrition, dehydration and possible famine.

Drought in Mexico has the largest impact on the agriculture sector and is of increasing concern every year particularly in northern and central Mexico, including **Chihuahua, Sonora, Coahuila** and **Sinaloa states**. Food and water shortages triggered by droughts have also the potential to trigger widespread social unrest and malnutrition in impoverished areas. Urban areas commonly employ techniques of rainwater harvesting and storage as a means to combat drought. This water can be used for flushing toilets, washing laundry or bathing.

Anticipate severe shortages to water supplies in drought-affected areas. Tap water may not be safe to drink and is likely to require treatment for purposes of consumption. Consult closely with your country's consulate or designated representative to develop plans for emergency extraction.

Wildfires

A wildfire is a fire that breaks out in an area of combustible vegetation, normally located in the countryside or rural areas.

The prevalence of wildfires in Mexico varies significantly according to topography, local climate, and vegetation type and structure. In recent years, the number of fires has increased due to illegal slash and burn agricultural activities, especially in **Chihuahua, Guerrero, Durango, State of Mexico** and **Mexico City**. Trees felled by hurricanes may also contribute to fires. Wildfires tend to cause widespread evacuations and often prove to be disruptive for overland travel in Mexico.

In areas under wildfire threat, stay indoors at a relatively safe distance from the blaze

and limit your exposure to smoke by closing all windows and doors. The fresh-air intake on air-conditioners should be shut. If your place of residence is threatened, select a direct route that leads you away from fire hazards, complying with all directives, including evacuation orders, from emergency management officials. Watch for changes in the speed and direction of the fire and wear protective clothing: sturdy shoes, cotton or wool pants, a long-sleeved shirt, gloves and a handkerchief to protect your face.

Volcanic Eruptions

A volcanic eruption occurs when lava, rocks and gas are discharged from a volcanic vent. Eruptions can also trigger volcanic ash clouds and landslides called lahar.

Mexico is home to 10 historically active volcanoes, which have varied in their recent degrees of activity. Most active volcanoes in the region are found in belts produced by the subduction of the Pacific oceanic crust beneath the southern edge of the North American Plate and the western edge of the Caribbean Plate. **Popocatepetl**, located 70 km (45 miles) southeast of **Mexico City**, has the greatest potential for danger since more than 20 million people live near enough to be threatened by its eruptions. Eruptions from **Popocatepetl** have periodically affected flight operations at the nearby **Puebla's Hermanos Serdán International Airport (PBC/MMPB)** and **Mexico City's Benito Juárez International Airport (MEX/MMMX)**

In the event of a volcanic eruption, listen to your radio or television until you are told all is safe or you receive instructions to evacuate. Local authorities may elect to vacate specific areas at greater risk. If instructed to remain indoors, stay inside with windows and doors closed and all heating and air conditioning systems turned off. Move to a ground level interior room without windows. If you are caught in an outdoor rock fall, roll into a ball to protect your head. Immediately evacuate an area when volcanic fumes and gases begin to cause an irritation to your sensory or respiratory organs. Your symptoms should dissipate when you are no longer in contact with the gases or fumes. Keep your vehicle engine switched off. Avoid driving in heavy ashfall. Ash and debris may clog a car's engine, causing the vehicle to stall. If driving is unavoidable, ensure that all windows are rolled up and that the air conditioning system is turned off. In the event of volcanic activity, avoid travel within the radius of the danger zone established by authorities. Volcanic ash clouds may also impact air travel if the volcano is located within range of an airport; confirm updated itineraries with airline

representatives if this occurs.

Smog/Haze and Pollution

Smog is a kind of air pollution, originally named for the mixture of smoke and fog in the air. Haze often occurs when dust and smoke particles accumulate in relatively dry air. When weather conditions block the dispersal of smoke and other pollutants they concentrate and form a low-hanging shroud that impairs visibility. Industrial pollution and large forest fires generally contribute to smog/haze. Even short exposure to occasional "very high" or "severe" particulate concentrations are dangerous for those suffering from existent heart or lung illnesses. Air pollutants including respirable suspended particulates and nitrogen dioxide increase the viscosity of elements in the blood, binding cells together to form clots that may obstruct blood vessels in the heart or the head and contribute to the risk of heart attack or stroke.

Air pollution can be a significant problem in certain regions of the country, including **Monterrey (Nuevo León), Toluca (State of Mexico), Salamanca, León and Irapuato (Guanajuato)** and the **Valley of Mexico (Mexico City and parts of State of Mexico)**. The situation is often exacerbated during dry conditions as well as poor air circulation, a result of inversion whereby warmer air is held above cooler air and traps air pollution close to the ground. Authorities have implemented several programmes to tackle the problem of smog and air pollution, including the introduction of temporary suspension of some industrial production and restrictions on the circulation of vehicles when pollution levels are high.

Travellers with acute respiratory problems are advised to consult regional air quality reports before engaging in outdoor activities. Carry required medication at all times and consider using a face mask.

Surf/Rip currents

A rip current is a strong, localised and narrow current of water which moves directly away from the shore, cutting through the lines of breaking waves like a river running out to sea and is strongest near the surface of the water. Rip currents can be hazardous to people in the water.

Strong undertows and currents can make swimming at **Pacific Coast beaches** extremely dangerous even for experienced swimmers. Lifeguards are not always present at beaches and search and rescue capabilities may be limited, while access to medical resources in these areas is also inadequate.

A person caught in a rip current may notice that he or she is moving away from the shore quite rapidly. It is often not possible to swim directly back to shore against a rip current, so this is not recommended. Contrary to popular belief, a rip does not pull a swimmer under the water, it actually carries the swimmer away from the shore in a narrow band of moving water. The swimmer can get out of the rip by swimming across the current, parallel to the shore, in either direction until out of the rip current, which is normally not very wide. Once out of the rip, swimming back to shore is relatively easy in areas where waves are breaking and where floating objects and swimmers are being pushed towards the shore. Alternatively, swimmers who are caught in a strong rip current can relax and go with the flow (either floating or treading water) until the current dissipates beyond the surf line, and then they can signal for help, or swim back through the surf diagonally away from the rip and towards the shore. Dangerous surf/rip currents can occur during periods of severe thunderstorms near coastal areas. Avoid swimming during such occasions.

Recent incidents

21 September 2023 - 22 September 2023

● **Moderate risk:** Authorities monitor Popocatepetl volcano activities between Mexico and Puebla states

Authorities detected at least 201 exhalations over the past 24-48 hours at the Popocatepetl volcano between Mexico and Puebla states as of afternoon hours local time; the Yellow Phase 2 alert, indicating an increase in activity with sporadic explosions, was in effect. Unconfirmed reports indicated that ashes were heading towards southern Mexico City.

19 September 2023 - 20 September 2023

● **Moderate risk:** Fog triggers temporary suspension of flight operations at Morelia International Airport, Michoacán state

Airport officials reported that General Francisco J. Mujica International Airport (MLM/MMMM) serving the cities of Morelia and Álvaro Obregón, Michoacán state, temporarily suspended flight operations at 06:20 local time (12:20 GMT), due to fog. Flight operations are expected to resume once weather conditions improve.

07 September 2023 - 08 September 2023

● **Medium risk:** Fog triggers temporary closure of Puebla International Airport, Puebla state

Airport officials reported that the Hermanos Serdán International Airport (PBC/MMPB) serving the city of Puebla, Puebla state, was temporarily closed at around 06:40 local time (12:40 GMT), due to fog. Flight operations are expected to resume once weather conditions improve.

07 September 2023 - 08 September 2023

● **Low risk:** Fog triggers temporary closure of Puebla International Airport, Puebla state - Closed

Officials at Puebla Hermanos Serdán International Airport (PBC/MMPB) indicated that flight operations resumed following their earlier suspension due to fog.

Health and Medical: ● Moderate Risk

Overview

Adequate medical and emergency facilities are in place in all major cities, while excellent health facilities are available in **Mexico City** and other metropolitan cities; outside of urban centres, facilities are limited and lacking in resources. The availability of emergency responders may be below international standards. Malaria and dengue fever are common in some low-lying areas of Mexico, and the quality of tap water cannot be guaranteed.

Before you travel

Consult your doctor or a healthcare provider who specialises in travel medicine at least six weeks before your departure. If you have a medical condition, you should also share your travel plans with your doctor.

Outbreaks and Other Diseases

Malaria

Areas with Malaria:

- Chiapas and southern part of Chihuahua
- Rare in Campeche, Durango, Nayarit, Quintana Roo, Sinaloa, Sonora, and Tabasco
- No malaria transmission along the U.S.–Mexico border

Recommended chemoprophylaxis:

- Chiapas and southern part of Chihuahua: Atovaquone-proguanil, chloroquine, doxycycline, mefloquine, primaquine, tafenoquine
- All other areas with malaria transmission: No chemoprophylaxis recommended (insect bite precautions / mosquito avoidance only)

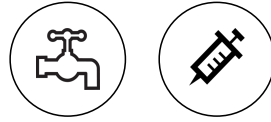
Yellow Fever

There is no risk of Yellow Fever infection.

Vaccinations, Medicines and Documentation

Note: Requirements and recommendations for vaccines and other medicines are based on guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Yellow Fever documentation requirements are based on World Health Organisation guidelines. Other entry requirements are based on Riskline research.

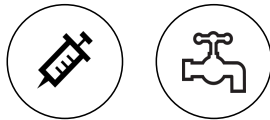
Routine vaccines



Make sure you are up-to-date on all routine vaccines before every trip. Some of these vaccines include

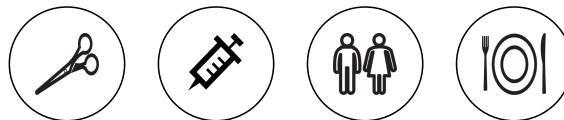
- Chickenpox (Varicella)
- Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis
- Flu (influenza)
- Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR)
- Polio
- Shingles

COVID-19



All eligible travellers should be up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines.

Hepatitis A



Recommended for unvaccinated travellers one year old or older going to Mexico.

Infants 6 to 11 months old should also be vaccinated against Hepatitis A. The dose does not count toward the routine 2-dose series.

Travellers allergic to a vaccine component or who are younger than 6 months should receive a single dose of immune globulin, which provides effective protection for up to 2 months depending on dosage given.

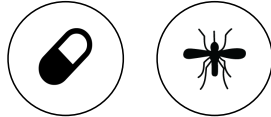
Unvaccinated travellers who are over 40 years old, immunocompromised, or have chronic medical conditions planning to depart to a risk area in less than 2 weeks should get the initial dose of vaccine and at the same appointment receive immune globulin.

Hepatitis B



Recommended for unvaccinated travellers younger than 60 years old travelling to Mexico. Unvaccinated travellers 60 years and older may get vaccinated before travelling to Mexico.

Malaria



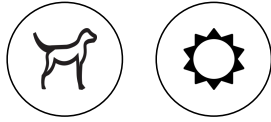
CDC recommends that travellers going to certain areas of Mexico take prescription medicine to prevent malaria. Depending on the medicine you take, you will need to start taking this medicine multiple days before your trip, as well as during and after your trip. Talk to your doctor about which malaria medication you should take.

Measles



Infants 6 to 11 months old travelling internationally should get 1 dose of measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine before travel. This dose does not count as part of the routine childhood vaccination series.

Rabies



Rabid dogs are commonly found in Mexico. However, if you are bitten or scratched by a dog or other mammal while in Mexico, rabies treatment is often available.

Consider rabies vaccination before your trip if your activities mean you will be around dogs or wildlife.

Travellers more likely to encounter rabid animals include

- Campers, adventure travellers, or cave explorers (spelunkers)
- Veterinarians, animal handlers, field biologists, or laboratory workers handling animal specimens
- Visitors to rural areas

Since children are more likely to be bitten or scratched by a dog or other animals, consider rabies vaccination for children travelling to Mexico.

Typhoid



Recommended for most travellers, especially those staying with friends or relatives or visiting smaller cities or rural areas.

Required documentation

Yellow Fever entry requirement (Source: USA CDC):

None

Other entry requirements:

None

Note: Documentation requirements are subject to change. Consult your destination embassy or consulate prior to departure for confirmation.

While you are there

Emergency Numbers

All emergencies	911	
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Emergency services

Mexico's medical emergency system varies depending on location, with response usually taking anywhere between 15 and 30 minutes, depending on the provider. Private hospitals have faster response times, but these are dependent on traffic conditions in large urban centres such as **Mexico City**.

Evacuation

It is very unlikely medical evacuation would be required for injury or illness. However in extreme remote or rural areas, patients suffering from a medical emergency will need to be transferred to a major urban centre with better medical facilities.

Routine care

A wide disparity in medical facilities exists in Mexico. Modern hospitals with highly skilled medical professionals and sophisticated technology exist in the major metropolitan areas such as **Mexico City, Monterrey** and **Guadalajara**. Most major tourist destinations, such as **Cancún, Puerto Vallarta** and **Acapulco**, have first-rate,

modern health care facilities, and most of these are privately owned and cater to tourists. In smaller cities, public hospitals run by the Mexican Institute of Social Security (Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social, IMMS), are easily accessible but significantly more limited than private hospitals, as they usually lack modern equipment. The public healthcare system consists of some 1,300 hospitals and 18,500 health centres across 32 states. Medical professionals in major metropolitan areas and tourist destinations provide good quality care, on par with international standards and will likely be able to speak English. In general, physicians and surgeons in Mexico are well trained and have good diagnostic and treatment skills.

Medicine

High quality prescription drugs are widely available, and over-the-counter medicines are readily available in stand-alone pharmacies. While travellers are unlikely to experience any difficulties in entering the country with their own prescription medicine, it is advisable that all prescription drugs are kept in their original container noting the patient's name.

Payment

Doctors and hospitals often expect immediate payment for health services, and foreign medical insurance is not always valid; many facilities are known to refuse to deal with insurance companies directly, therefore patients should prepare to pay for treatment themselves before being reimbursed by their insurance company.

Ailments

Chagas Disease



The risk occurs below 1,500 metres (4,900 ft) elevation in the rural areas across the country, particularly in the **southern** and **western states**. A surge in cases of Chagas disease was reported in across **Yucatán** since January 2023, with cases confirmed across 24 states, with the highest incidence in **Oaxaca, Nuevo León** and **Guanajuato**.

Chagas disease is a parasitic infection transmitted by insects, usually the triatomine bug, and is most prevalent in rural areas. Symptoms include fever and swelling at the site of the insect bite. If left untreated, the disease can cause serious chronic conditions, including damage to the heart and gastrointestinal system. Chagas disease can be treated with a course of antiparasitics.

Chikungunya Fever



Chikungunya fever has been recorded in states of southern Mexico, including **Chiapas, Oaxaca, Guerrero, Michoacán, Veracruz** and **Tabasco**, with four cases reported in 2022.

Chikungunya fever is a viral infection, transmitted via mosquito bite. Generally non-fatal, the symptoms of Chikungunya fever include a high fever, joint pain and headaches. In most cases those infected recover after seven to ten days. There are no vaccines or treatments for chikungunya.

Cholera



This disease is sporadically active in this country but the threat to visitors is very low.

Cholera is a bacterial infection transmitted through contact with infected food or water – usually by infected faeces – and is most prevalent in areas with poor sanitary standards. Symptoms include heavy, watery diarrhoea, vomiting and muscle cramps. If left untreated, cholera can rapidly become fatal. Cholera can be treated with a course of rehydration and antibiotics.

Dengue Fever



Dengue fever is common in low-lying areas of Mexico, particularly along both the **Pacific** and **Caribbean coast**.

Dengue fever is a viral infection, transmitted by the bite of the Aedes mosquito, which is most active during early morning and late afternoon hours and is commonly found in urban areas. Symptoms include a high fever, joint pain and headaches, although severe cases may cause significant falls in blood pressure and/or haemorrhaging, which can be fatal. There are no vaccines or treatments for dengue fever.

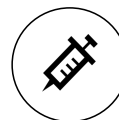
Gnathostomiasis



High risk areas include the states of **Sinaloa, Oaxaca, Veracruz, Tamaulipas, Nayarit** and **Guerrero**.

Gnathostomiasis is a parasitic infection transmitted through the consumption of improperly cooked or raw infected freshwater fish and birds. Early symptoms include fever, diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting and stomach aches; later symptoms include tender, moving swellings beneath the skin. If gnathostomiasis spreads to other parts of the body, it can cause blindness and nerve damage – in rare cases it may trigger a coma, or become fatal. Gnathostomiasis can be treated with a course of antiparasitics.

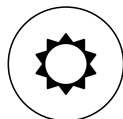
Hepatitis (A, B, C, D and E)



Hepatitis A is highly endemic in Mexico.

Hepatitis is inflammation of the liver. The three main variations (A, B and C) are caused by infections from parasites, bacteria or viruses, but are transmitted by different means.

Hookworm



Hookworm, roundworm and whipworm infections, and also strongyloidiasis, are highly prevalent in most rural areas.

Hookworm is a parasitic infection transmitted through contact with contaminated soil, particularly in rural areas with poor hygiene and sanitation standards. Early symptoms include itchy skin and rashes; in cases where persons are heavily infected, more serious symptoms include diarrhoea, fatigue, stomach ache and anaemia. Hookworm can be treated with a course of antiparasitics.

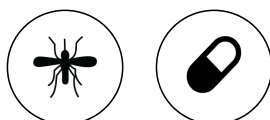
Leishmaniasis



Cutaneous leishmaniasis is endemic in rural areas in the southern territory of **Quintana Roo**, eastern **Yucatan**, **Campeche**, eastern **Tabasco**, **Chiapas**, **Oaxaca** and eastern **Veracruz**. Mucocutaneous leishmaniasis (espundia) has occurred in **Jalisco state**, and visceral leishmaniasis (kala-azar) has occurred in **Guerrero** and **Morelos states**.

Leishmaniasis is a parasitic infection transmitted by the bite of sand flies, which are most active during early morning and late evening hours. Symptoms of cutaneous leishmaniasis include swollen glands and sores; symptoms of visceral leishmaniasis include fever, swelling of the liver or spleen and weight loss. Leishmaniasis can be treated with a course of Amphotericin B, an antifungal.

Malaria

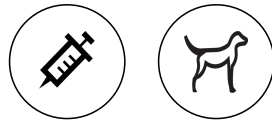


Malaria is limited to areas infrequently visited by travellers, including small foci along the **Guatemala** and **Belize borders** in the states of **Chiapas**, **Quintana Roo** and

Tabasco; rural areas in the states of **Nayarit**, **Oaxaca** and **Sinaloa**; and in parts of **Sonora**, **Chihuahua** and **Durango**. No malaria risk exists along the **US-Mexico border** or in the major resorts along the **Pacific** and **Gulf coasts**.

Malaria is a serious parasitic infection, transmitted by the bite of the Anopheles mosquito. Symptoms can be flu-like and include a high fever, joint pain, anaemia, chills and headaches; if left untreated, symptoms can quickly complicate and become life-threatening. While pre-departure courses of anti-malarial prophylactics are available, these do not guarantee immunity to malaria. Caught early, malaria can be treated easily with a range of anti-malarial medications.

Rabies



Several dozen or more human cases are reported annually. Ninety percent of cases are acquired from contact with rabid dogs, usually in rural areas, while rabid vampire bats have been reported in **Sinaloa state**.

Rabies is a serious viral infection, transmitted through close contact with saliva from infected animals (i.e. bites, scratches or licks on broken skin and mucous membranes). Travellers who suspect they may have come into contact with a rabies-infected animal should seek immediate emergency attention: post-exposure treatment has a high success rate if administered early. Late-stage rabies (when symptoms begin to occur) is untreatable and fatal.

Traveller's diarrhoea (TD)



High risk country-wide outside major resorts and first-class hotels. Travellers are recommended to only drink bottled water and avoid ice in drinks.

Traveller's diarrhoea (TD) is a catch-all term for a number of minor or moderate bacterial, viral and parasitic infections, generally transmitted through infected food

or water. In the majority of cases antibiotics or anti-diarrhoeal medication is unnecessary; travellers experiencing TD should ensure that they remain hydrated and well rested until their symptoms dissipate. Most cases of TD last less than three days; if diarrhoea continues for longer periods, travellers should consider consulting a medical professional.

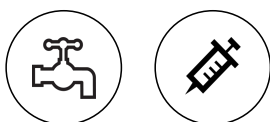
Zika Virus



Sporadic cases of zika virus have been reported in the southern states of **Chiapas**, **Campeche** and **Yucatán**, as well as **Morelos**. At least 12 cases were reported in 2022.

Zika virus is a viral infection transmitted by the bite of the Aedes mosquito, which is most active during early morning and late afternoon hours and commonly found in urban areas, as well as through sexual contact with an infected person. Most cases of Zika virus are asymptomatic; where symptoms occur they are usually mild and include fever, headaches, conjunctivitis, rash and joint and muscle pain. Zika has been linked to microcephaly in unborn children. There is no treatment for Zika virus, beyond rehydration and bed rest.

Measles



In 2020, a total of 196 cases of measles were confirmed in the country, representing the largest outbreak since 2004. No new cases have been reported since then.

Measles is a highly contagious viral infection transmitted via coughing and sneezing from infected persons. Cold-like symptoms as well as fever are initially presented before a skin rash develops three to five days later. The measles vaccine is effective at preventing the disease. There is no treatment once infected beyond rehydration and bed rest.

Recent incidents

24 April 2023 - 25 April 2023

- **Moderate risk: Spike in Chagas disease cases reported in Yucatan**

Health officials in Yucatan indicated a surge in cases of Chagas disease across the state since the start of the year. At least 18 cases were reported up until 1 April, compared to seven cases during the same period in 2022. Nationwide, there have been approximately 211 confirmed cases across 24 states, with the highest incidence in Oaxaca, Nuevo León and Guanajuato.

14 April 2023 - 15 April 2023

- **Low risk: Authorities lift COVID-19 state of emergency, ease mask requirements in Nuevo León – Update**

Authorities in Nuevo León state announced that effective 14 April, the COVID-19 state of emergency was lifted. Masks remain required in nursing homes and nurseries and may be required in hospitals.

05 April 2023 - 06 April 2023

- **Low risk: Authorities ease COVID-19 restrictions in Tamaulipas – Update**

Officials announced on 5 April that masks were no longer required in most spaces in Tamaulipas state, amid an improvement in the COVID-19 situation. Masks remain obligatory in healthcare facilities, nursing homes and educational centres. All public and private establishments may operate at full capacity.

04 April 2023 - 05 April 2023

- **Low risk: Authorities lift COVID-19 mask and social distancing requirements in Tlaxcala state – Update**

Authorities announced on 4 April that masks were no longer required in any indoor or outdoor spaces, amid an improvement in the COVID-19 situation. Officials also lifted other social distancing measures, including capacity limits for indoor spaces.

Summary

Borders are open and economic activities have resumed nationwide. The testing rate is among the lowest in the region and healthcare capacity was struggling amid a fifth wave of COVID-19 which peaked in mid-July 2022, with cases steadily decreasing since.

The sanitary emergency due to COVID-19 was declared over on 9 May.

What is the current nationwide Policy?: Open

Policy starts: 01 May 2022

Policy ends: indef

Policy explanation:

A nationwide "traffic light" system was revoked on 1 May 2022 as the country transitioned from a pandemic stage to an endemic stage. Mobility restrictions are no longer in place and businesses are operating regularly. Wearing a mask is recommended in indoor and outdoor public spaces when social distancing is challenging and on public transport.

On 9 May, the Mexican government announced the end of the sanitary emergency in the country due to COVID-19.

Policy source: <https://medidassanitarias.covid19.cdmx.gob.mx/>
<https://www.elfinanciero.com.mx/salud/2023/05/09/emergencia-sanitaria-por-covid-19-termina-en-mexico/>

Last update: 31 August 2023



Infection

Infection Level:	Moderate
Infection rate:	2.06 cases per 100k in the last 14 days
As of date:	13 September 2023
Hotspots:	-



International Travel

International Flights

Is there a ban on international commercial flights? No
Through what date?

Flight Ban Explanation:

Most airlines, including Aeroméxico, United Airlines and Lufthansa have resumed service to and from Mexico. In September 2023, the United States Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) upgraded Mexico's aviation safety rating to Category 1, indicating the country was in compliance with international standards.

On 15 February, Aeromar officials announced the termination of all operations from all destinations previously served by the airline, among which were Mexico City, Acapulco, Cancún, Guadalajara, Mazatlán, Puebla and Puerto Vallarta in Mexico, Havana in Cuba, and the cities of Laredo and McAllen in the US, due to financial difficulties.

Last Update: 15 September 2023

Entry and Borders

Is there a ban on entry for any travellers? No
Through what date?

Travellers from where are banned?

Land border: Open

Maritime border: Open

Entry Rules Explanation:

All travellers are allowed entry. Health screenings, including temperature checks, may be in place at airports and other ports of entry.

Immigration officials will determine the number of days non-resident travellers may remain in Mexico and note it on the migration form ('Forma Migratoria Múltiple' or FMM) or on a stamp in the passport. The maximum number of days (180) is not always granted. If you are given the FMM form, you need it to leave the country. Authorities have the right to detain individuals who exceed the duration of stay granted.

The Amistad Dam International Bridge between Del Rio in Texas, United States (US), and Ciudad Acuña in Coahuila, Mexico, will be closed until 10 November, due to maintenance work. The Amistad Dam Port of Entry will be closed and cease operations during that time.

Entry Rules: <https://mx.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information-for-u-s-citizens-in-mexico/>

Last Update:

Testing

Do travellers need to take a COVID-19 test No

When?

Is it mandatory or optional?

Test Type:

Minimum age requirement:

Pre-travel test validity, in hours:

After arrival test days:

Testing Explanation:

Testing Rules: -

Last Update: 31 August
2023

Health and Travel Documentations

Do arriving travellers need any health and/or travel documentation? No

Documentation Explanation:

Last Update: 31 August
2023

Tracing App

Do travellers need to use a contact tracing app after arriving? No

Tracing App Explanation:

There is no mandatory national contact tracing app at this time.

Last Update: 31 August
2023

Quarantine on Arrival

Who needs to quarantine on arrival None

Travellers from where need to quarantine?

How many days is quarantine?

Is it self-quarantine or operated by the government?

Quarantine Explanation:

There is no requirement for international arrivals to quarantine. Arriving travellers may be subject to health screening, including temperature checks. Travellers exhibiting symptoms may be subject to additional health screenings or quarantine.

Quarantine Rules: <https://mx.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information-for-u-s-citizens-in-mexico/>

Last Update: 2023-08-31

Exit

Is there a ban on exit for any travellers? No

Are there special requirements to exit? No

Exit Requirements Explanation:

Authorities no longer require a health questionnaire for exit. Airlines may, however, require travellers to complete a health questionnaire prior to travel.

Exit Requirements

(URL):

-

Last Update:

31 August
2023

Vaccination

Percent vaccinated with at least one dose: 75.022 as of 02 Jun 2023

Percent fully vaccinated: 64.19 as of 07 Oct 2022

Is vaccination mandatory for entry? No

Fully vaccinated are exempt from: -

Minimum age for vaccine requirements for travel:

Exemptions for vaccine requirements for travel:

"Fully vaccinated" is defined by the destination as:

Accepted vaccines, validity and special age restrictions:

Is mixing of vaccine doses authorised?

Are specific combinations of mixed doses required?

"Boosted" is defined by the destination as:

Accepted boosters:

"Recently recovered" is defined by the destination as:

Recovery status is valid from days until after .

Vaccination certificates accepted:

Vaccination certificates accepted in the following languages:

Recent recovery document required:

Recent recovery document accepted in the following languages:

Explanation:

Travellers are not required to present proof of vaccination for entry.

Some states have imposed vaccination requirements for local activities.

Sources: <https://mx.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information-for-u-s-citizens-in-mexico/>

Last change to vaccination policy:

Last Update: 31 August 2023

Other International Travel Restrictions

Exit Requirements Explanation:

Last Update:



Domestic Situation

Areas on Lockdown

Last Update:

Areas under Curfew

Irapuato, Guanajuato state: a security-related curfew runs nightly from 02:00 local time with bars, nightclubs, and other establishments, such as convenience stores, being required to close by 02:00, amid a recent uptick in violent crime. As of 31 August, is not clear whether this measure is still in place.

Last Update: 31 August 2023

Domestic Travel

Domestic Travel Explanation:

Public transport operations have resumed. Domestic flights are operational, with Interjet flights cancelled until further notice.

Last Update: 31 August 2023

Other Domestic Restrictions

Social, economic and educational activities resumed nationwide as Mexico transitioned to an endemic phase. Some municipalities may impose specific restrictions.

Sonora

Caborca: Businesses are recommended to close at 22:00 local time daily due to an increase in clashes between armed criminal groups.

Last Update: 31 August 2023

Resources

Government COVID Site: <https://datos.covid-19.conacyt.mx/>

There are no recent incidents

Local Travel : ● Medium Risk

Travel Safety

Air Travel and Airports: In September 2023, the United States Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) upgraded Mexico's aviation safety rating to Category 1, indicating the country was in compliance with international standards. The FAA earlier issued a downgrade to Category 2 in May 2021 largely due to concerns over the oversight of the country's air carriers.

Mexican airports apply an Airport Departure Fee (TUA) to all passengers of age two or older for the use of the facilities and services of the terminal building. The amount varies depending on the airport. The fee is generally included in the airfare.

The state of **Baja California Sur** charges a tourism tax from foreign visitors. Cruise ship passengers and visitors staying less than 24 hours are exempt from the tax, while airlines will generally include the tax in the airfare. If needed, payments can be made through kiosks at the **San José del Cabo International Airport (SJD/MMSD)**, a website and mobile QR code.

Travellers of 15 years of age or older visiting **Quintana Roo** state are required to pay a mandatory visitor tax. The fee is collected at the airports before leaving Mexico and can be paid either at the kiosks installed in the airport or through the official Visitax website: <https://www.visitax.gob.mx/sitio/>.

Mexico City International Airport (MEX/MMMX), known as **Benito Juárez** (or AICM), is located some 13km (eight miles) east of the city centre. Buses, taxis, metro and metrobus services run from the airport to destinations around the city. The best option is to have a local contact or a representative from your hotel meet you at the international arrivals terminal. Another option would be to purchase a taxi ticket with a radio taxi company, or using ride-hailing services. Avoid flagging city taxis from the airport as many drivers may be associated with organised crime.

Reports of theft from inside luggage at the airport is common; the majority of the thefts are allegedly committed by staff of private security companies hired by airlines to inspect passengers' checked bags. Travellers are reminded to avoid packing expensive items, including jewellery, electronics and bank cards, in their checked luggage, and to avoid demonstration of wealth. Foreign nationals have been robbed after exchanging money at the airport - thieves typically observe the exchange

operation and inform motorcycle-borne accomplices who follow the victims in their cars before staging an assault near the airport. Reports indicate that airport security officials could be involved in the crimes as well. **Benito Juárez** is also a major hotspot of people trafficking.

Felipe Ángeles International Airport (NLU/MMSM), also known as **Santa Lucía Airport** or **AIFA** was inaugurated in 2022. The airport is located some 45km (28 miles) northeast of **Benito Juárez International Airport** in **Zumpango, State of Mexico**. The airport connects by public transport with **Benito Juárez Airport** well as **Central Norte, Central Sur, Central Poniente** or **Central TAPO bus stations** and **Perisur, Santa Fe, Mundo E, Cuautitlán**, the **National Auditorium**, the **World Trade Centre (WTC)**, **Indios Verdes, Ciudad Azteca** and **Toreo** in **Mexico City** and **Mexico State**. By private vehicles and taxis the access is through **México-Pachuca highway (Autopista México-Pachuca)** and **Camino a San Jerónimo** as well as **Circuito Exterior Mexiquense**. The airport serves flights from Aeroméxico, Viva Aerobus and Volaris among other airlines.

Cancún International Airport (CUN/MMUN) is some 22km (14 miles) southwest of the city. Buses and taxis run trips between the airport and the city. Generally speaking, taxis are a viable option, although it is preferable to have a hotel representative meet you at the terminal.

Guadalajara International Airport (GDL/MMGL), also known as **Miguel Hidalgo**, is located some 19km (12 miles) south east of the city. Bus and taxi options are available.

Acapulco International Airport (ACA/MMAA), known as the **General Juan N Alvarez**, is located 26km (16 miles) southeast of the city. Bus and taxi services are readily available.

Road Travel: Traffic moves on the right in Mexico. It is generally safe for foreign nationals to drive in the country, though certain remote regions where drug traffickers and gangs are known to operate should be avoided. Visitors who drive through the border zone from the US into Mexico with their vehicle must obtain a temporary import permit or risk vehicle confiscation by Mexican customs officials. Mexican law also requires that vehicles be driven only by their rightful owners, or that the owner be inside the vehicle. If not followed, the vehicle may be seized by Mexican customs and will not be returned.

In Mexico, there are two types of main highways: toll ('cuota') and free ('libre'). Although Mexico's toll roads are more expensive than in other countries, they are

uniformly safer and better maintained, as well as faster and more efficient than the freeways. Tolls generally do not accept card payments.

Roads in central Mexico are in decent condition and generally are well marked, as are roads in areas heavily visited by tourists, areas such as **Cancún**, **Acapulco**, and **Oaxaca**. Road conditions along Mexico's **Caribbean** and **Pacific coasts** can be very poor in some sections. There is a gradual decrease in road conditions travelling east-west between Mexico's northern cities, especially in the mountainous areas. Roads in **Chiapas** are in poor condition across the state. Driving in **Mexico City** is hectic at best, and traffic stops give opportunistic thieves plenty of time to rob unsuspecting foreign nationals, so keep vigilant. Self-drive is generally not recommended in **Mexico City**. Traffic accidents are common, and if one occurs, stay with your vehicle until the traffic cops arrive. Consider having available the appropriate traffic cop dispatch number for the city (or cities) you will be driving through. The area north and east of **Mexico City**, south of **San Luis Potosí** and around **Querétaro** have the most crime-ridden roads, with the **Querétaro-Irapuato** and **Querétaro-San Luis Potosí Highways** and two sections of **Highway 150D: Mexico City-Puebla** and **Puebla-Córdoba** among the roads most threatened by robberies.

Driving at night is not advised, and in **northern Mexico**, drivers should consider bringing extra petrol cans, as the distance between petrol stops is farther than the gas mileage of most vehicles. If travellers have an emergency while driving, call '074', but this number is not always answered. The general emergency number is 911. If driving on a toll highway ('cuota') or any other major highway, the 'Green Angels' or Angeles Verdes - a fleet of trucks with bilingual crews - can be summoned by dialling '078'. Note that in many remote areas, including in touristic states, mobile phone service is virtually non-existent. This includes along roads south of **Felipe Carrillo Puerto** or east of **José María Morelos** in **Quintana Roo**.

Police in rural areas along the **Pacific coast** and in **Chiapas** are known to stop visitors at randomly positioned checkpoints in order to extort them. If possible, travel with a Mexican driver, who will know how to handle the cops' demands. If alone, try to reason with the police. At times, it is more convenient to pay the required 'fee' at the roadblock. Meanwhile, organised criminal gangs, often with links to drug cartels, have erected their own unauthorised checkpoints. Likewise, self-defence, or vigilante groups, have established their own blockades in small communities and have shot and injured motorists who failed to stop. Such roadblocks are more common in **Guerrero** and **Michoacán states**. The **Mexico-Guatemala border** area, especially close to the **Pacific coast**, is violent due to the presence of the Mara Salvatrucha and Barrio 18

street gangs. The border areas immediately surrounding towns on the **Mexico-US border** should also be avoided.

Exercise caution when travelling the **Pacific Highway** and avoid travel along this route at night. Highways in **Mexicali Valley** in **Baja California**, between **Ciudad Juárez** and **Chihuahua City** in **Chihuahua** and between **Hermosillo** and **Nogales** in **Sonora** at night, between **Piedras Negras** in **Coahuila state** and **Nuevo Laredo** in **Tamaulipas**, between **Nuevo Laredo** and **Reynosa** and between the northern border and **Ciudad Victoria** in **Tamaulipas** should also be avoided due to high rates of violence and criminal activity, including armed robbery, carjacking, kidnapping, extortion and sexual assault. In **Colima**, travel should be deferred to the **Michoacán border**, **Tecomán** as well as between **La Tecomaca** and the **Jalisco border**; in **Durango**, areas west and south of **Federal Highway 45**; in **Guanajuato**, areas south of **Federal Highway 45D**; in **Jalisco**, **Federal Highway 80** south of **Cocula**, **State Highway 544** between **Mascota** and **San Sebastian del Oeste** as well as the **Jalisco-Michoacán border**; in **Michoacán**, outside of arterial **highways 15 D, 43 or 48D**; in **Nayarit**, to **Tepic** and **San Blas** as well as the **Sinaloa border**; in **Oaxaca** the **Isthmus region** and **Federal Highway 200** between **Pinotepa** and the **Guerrero border**; in **Sinaloa** outside of **Mazatlán**, **Los Mochis** and **Topolobampo**; in **Sonora**, west of the **Mariposa border crossing**, east of **Sonoyta** and north of **Altar municipality** as well as areas south of **Hermosillo** and **Guaymas**, east of **Federal Highway 17**, between **Moctezuma** and **Sahuaripa**, and **State Highway 20** between **Sahuaripa** and **Federal Highway 16**; in **Tamaulipas**, outside of **Federal Highways**; and in **Zacatecas**, **Fresnillo municipality** and south of **Federal Highway 45** and west of **Federal Highway 23**.

Public Transport

Boats/Ferries: Persons bringing private vessels into Mexican waters should be aware of an increase in reported thefts of gear at marinas. Sailors who are victimised should immediately file a report with local authorities. If preparing to depart from a Mexican harbour, visit the harbourmaster and leave a detailed trip plan, including passenger/crew information and intended destination.

Buses: There is a significant difference between intracity and intercity travel on buses. City buses can be unsafe, particularly in periphery neighbourhoods at night. 'Peseros', or small buses with varying colours depending on location, are usually old, rickety and often violate traffic laws. Unlike many countries, you can request a stop wherever you want, which is not recommended as nearby drivers will be forced to brake suddenly. Fares are cheap. In **Mexico City**, two out of ten passengers have suffered from

robbery or assault aboard public transport.

Intercity travel on buses is safe and reliable across much of the country, excepting northern border states. There are many luxury bus lines, or 'ejecutivo' buses, that service all of the major cities in Mexico; these are very comfortable and affordable. Overnight bus services are a good option for long-distance travel. ETN, ADO, Estrella Blanca and Autotransportes Tufesa are reputable bus services.

Metro: The Mexico City Metro is a haven for pickpockets and bag-snatchers. Because robberies are common, foreign nationals should take extreme care with valuables and belongings. Avoid using the Metro during busy commuting hours in the morning or evening, and especially at night. If travel on the Metro is imperative, visitors should be accompanied by a local who is familiar with metro lines and the nature of the neighbourhoods surrounding metro stops.

Taxis: Street taxis have been singled out in past years as unsafe because of frequent reports of robbery and 'express kidnapping'. Express kidnapping is when a driver, sometimes aided by an accomplice, kidnaps a passenger for a short time, takes them to an ATM, and forces the abductee to withdraw all of the cash in their account. Reports of this type of crime have diminished in recent years, but travellers should exercise caution with street taxis. The preferred taxi options in **Mexico City** have a base that they return to called a 'sitio', rather than circling the city aimlessly like pink and white street taxis. These preferred taxis have a slightly higher fare. However, the drivers are paid a regular salary rather than earning per trip, so there is less incentive for them to rob or express kidnap passengers. Most hotels work with one or two nearby sitios and will call them to arrange transport for visitors. Be sure to get the particular sitio's business card so that you can call them if you end up in a neighbourhood that does not have a sitio. Private-hire ride-sharing services are generally another trustworthy option. Private drivers are recommended for travel within major cities and for travel between cities within close proximity, such as **Mexico City** and **Puebla**. They can, however, be very expensive for extended travel.

Ride-share services are generally safe. However, clashes between taxi drivers and ride-share service drivers have been reported. Licensed taxi drivers have held roadblocks and targeted ride-share services including in **Cancún's Hotel Zone**. Tourists have been pulled out from ride-share vehicles.

Trains: With the exception of minor services, all major train activity was indefinitely suspended in 2000 due to a lack of investment in maintenance. These minor services include **El Chepe**, a sight-seeing route from **Chihuahua** to the **Pacific coast**, and the

Tequila Express, a themed train ride from **Guadalajara** to **Amatitán**. In the **Yucatán Peninsula**, there are plans to re-introduce a passenger train line called Tren Maya, which ran with a name Expreso Maya from **Villahermosa** through **Campeche**, **Merida**, **Playa del Carmen** and its final destination, **Cancún**, until 2011. Service is set to run through a few Mayan ruins, including ****Chichen-Itza ****and **Palenque**.

Vehicle Rental: The best place to hire a car in Mexico is at international airports or major hotels. All the major international car rental companies operate in Mexico. Be sure to purchase full insurance, as it is compulsory in Mexico. Even minor traffic accidents can lead to some jail time if you are not covered by insurance. Foreign nationals should drive only with a full national driver's licence or an international driving permit. The minimum driving age in Mexico is 18.

Recent incidents

20 September 2023 - 21 September 2023

- **Medium risk:** Surge in migrants prompts closure of Eagle Pass International Bridge 1 to vehicles between US and Mexico

Local sources reported that authorities closed the Eagle Pass International Bridge 1 to vehicles between the United States' (US) Eagle Pass in Texas and Mexico's Piedras Negras in Coahuila state as of early evening hours local time due to a surge in migrants crossing into the US through the affected area. A related emergency declaration was issued in Eagle Pass.

19 September 2023 - 20 September 2023

- **Moderate risk:** Earthquake drill planned on 19 September in Mexico City, nationwide

Authorities will conduct an emergency exercise involving sounding of a seismic alert, evacuations and temporary traffic disruptions in Mexico City at 11:00 local time (17:00 GMT) on 19 September to mark the anniversaries of the 1985 and 2017 earthquakes. Similar exercises will be held nationwide.

19 September 2023 - 20 September 2023

- **Low risk:** Authorities close Ignacio Zaragoza International Bridge between Mexico's Tamaulipas and Texas, US - Closed

Mexican authorities announced that traffic resumed at the Ignacio Zaragoza (Los Tomates) International Bridge border crossing between Matamoros in Tamaulipas, Mexico, and Brownsville in Texas, US, as of morning hours local time following a closure a day earlier due to a protest on the Mexican side over a femicide in the area.

18 September 2023 - 20 September 2023

- **Moderate risk:** Authorities close Ignacio Zaragoza International Bridge between Mexico's Tamaulipas and Texas, US

United States (US) authorities closed the Ignacio Zaragoza International Bridge border crossing between Matamoros in Tamaulipas, Mexico, and Brownsville in Texas, US, since afternoon hours local time on 18 September due to a protest on the Mexican side over a femicide in the area. Significant disruptions to cross-border transit were reported; it was unclear when the border crossing will be reopened.

Destination Hotspots

Cities, Towns, Villages: Major drug cartels operate throughout Mexico, but their presence and violent activities predominate in the cities of **Tijuana, Ciudad Juárez, Nuevo Laredo, Matamoros, Monterrey, Nogales, Acapulco**, and in the states of **Baja California, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Colima, Durango, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Jalisco, Michoacán, Nuevo León, Sonora, Sinaloa, Tamaulipas, Veracruz** and **Zacatecas**.

Mexico City has high levels of petty and violent crime, particularly in poorer periphery neighbourhoods. Areas officially reporting high rates of crime in **Mexico City** include **Iztapalapa, Cuauhtémoc, Gustavo A. Madero, Benito Juárez, Coyoacán** and **Álvaro Obregón** and should be avoided. Other notable neighbourhoods with increased reports of crime include **El Centro, Colonia Del Valle, Colonia Narvarte, Colonia Doctores, Colonia Roma, Colonia Agrícola Oriental, Colonia Juarez, Colonia Guerrero, Colonia Maria La Ribera** and **Colonia Obrera**. Similarly, the following areas should be avoided at night: **Plaza Garibaldi, the Basilica of Guadalupe, the Merced market, Tepito** and **Santa Maria de la Ribera**. Although these areas may be safe to visit during daylight hours, the threat of violent crime increases at night. Incidents of muggings have been reported at the **Parque Nacional de las Cumbres del Ajusco** in the south of **Mexico City**. Areas surrounding **Benito Juárez International Airport**, all major bus terminals, the **ABC Hospital**, the central train station, the **Shrine of Guadalupe**, most of **Gustavo A. Madero** and **Iztapalapa delegaciones** also carry high rates of theft due to the sole fact that so many people move through these places that they attract criminals. Petty thievery is also common on all modes of public transport (notably the metro and crowded buses) as well as transport hubs and stations.

In **Guadalajara** the neighbourhoods of **Santa Cecilia, Oblatos** and **Beatriz Hernández** in the eastern part of the city; **San Juan de Dios** and **Analco** in the city centre, **Del Fresno, Villa Guerrero** and **El Sauz** in the south and **Ladrón de Guevara** and **Mezquitán Country** in the west are considered high risk due to constant reports of criminal activity and should be avoided. Multiple neighbourhoods in the surrounding **Zapopan, Tlaquepaque, Tonalá** and **Tlajomulco municipalities**, including city centres, are also considered high-risk. **Metropolitan Guadalajara** experienced record-high numbers of homicides and missing person reports in 2019; authorities attribute the increase to fighting between and within organised crime

groups. Robbery, auto-part theft and telephonic extortion are the most frequently reported non-violent crimes in the area.

In **Monterrey** the areas of **Independencia** and **Río Nazas** are considered high risk due to constant reports of criminal activity and should be avoided at all costs.

Apodaca and **General Mariano Escobedo** are also considered high risk. Out-lying suburbs and districts should also be avoided due to increased drug-related crime, particularly **Garza Nieto**. Residential burglary is rife in **Monterrey**, including in more affluent neighbourhoods, most commonly taking place during the day and on weekends or holidays when houses are vacant. Vehicle theft, carjacking, armed robbery and theft of parts from parked vehicles all are also common in the city. Armed thieves target parking lots including in **San Pedro Garza Garcia municipality**; over a dozen robberies of expensive watches were reported in these areas in 2019.

The presence of 10,000 troops and the National Guard, Mexico's northern border city of **Ciudad Juárez**, a city which has suffered the worst of Mexico's drug violence, slowly made an impact in the rate of violent crime; however, the capture of drug kingpins has led to a surge in violence, with 2020 witnessing the highest rate of violence, with 1,637 reported homicides, in the city since late 2000s. Defer all non-essential travel to areas southeast of **Boulevard Independencia**, south of **De los Montes Urales/Avenida Manuel J Clouthier/Carretera de Juárez**, and west of **Via Juan Gabriel/Avenida de los Insurgentes/Calle Miguel Ahumada/Francisco Javier Mina/Melchor Ochampo**, as well as the **Valle de Juárez** region.

Travel in the resort town of **Mazatlán** – located in **Sinaloa state**, home to the infamous Sinaloa Cartel – should be limited to **Zona Dorada**, the historic town centre and direct routes to and from these locations and **General Rafael Buelna International Airport (MZT/MMMZ)**.

Organised crime outfits are frequently present in **Tijuana's** local bars, nightclubs and casinos. Due to the presence of criminal activity, people should use extreme caution after dark in the **old Zona Centro** near **Avenida Revolución, Zona Centro. Playas de Tijuana** should also be avoided after nightfall and visitors are discouraged from using the roads to the coastal towns of **Playas de Tijuana, Rosarito** and **Ensenada** after dark. Elsewhere in **Baja California**, caution should be used in the overnight hours in **Tecate** and **Mexicali**, with travel to **Mexicali Valley** should be avoided.

While **Quintana Roo state**, and more specifically the **Mayan Riviera**, does not maintain the same level of violence as other cartel-affected states, crime rates and brazen attacks are increasing. Upwards of 1,100 security personnel were deployed to

the area in February 2019 to reinforce ongoing security operations amid an uptick in gang-related violence. On 21 February 2018, at least 20 people were injured when an improvised explosive device (IED) detonated on a Barcos Caribe tour boat arriving in **Playa del Carmen** from **Cozumel** island; days later local authorities found an undetonated device on another ferry operating on the same route. Mexican authorities ruled out terrorism and organised crime, but Cartel de "El Pumba y Tata", likely a Los Zetas-linked group, claimed responsibility and threatened the mayor of Cozumel. Dozens of deadly shootings have been reported inside bars, nightclubs, at festivals and on resort beaches since 2017, as the Cartel del Golfo and Los Zetas battle for control. Remain vigilant at all times and avoid travel to areas unlikely to be visited by tourists.

Over three million Americans travel to **Cancún** and other Mexican beach resorts each year, including as many as 120,000 during 'spring break' season, which normally begins in mid-February and runs about two months. Excessive alcohol consumption, especially by US citizens under the legal drinking age, is a significant problem. The legal drinking age in Mexico is 18 years, but it is not uniformly enforced. Alcohol is implicated in the majority of violent crime, arrests, accidents and deaths suffered by foreign nationals. There have been a significant number of rapes reported in **Cancún**, most of which occurred at night or in the early morning on deserted beaches and in hotel rooms. Acquaintance rape is a serious problem. In other cases, taxi drivers, hotel workers and even security personnel have been implicated.

Regions: Drug trafficking is particularly rife in northern Mexico, specifically along the **Mexico-US border**, which includes the states of **Baja California, Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo León** and **Tamaulipas**. Tourist locations are also not immune, with violent criminal activity frequently reported in **Los Cabos** and **La Paz** in **Baja California Sur** and in **Cozumel, Playa del Carmen, Riviera Maya** and **Tulum** in **Quintana Roo**. Turf battles are being fought between the CJNG and Sinaloa cartels, often allied with or acting through local gangs, particularly in **Guanajuato, Baja California, Michoacán, Zacatecas, Chihuahua** and **Sonora** states.

Due to illegal activity, non-essential travel should specifically be deferred to:

Colima state: the entire state, except the cities of **Colima** and **Manzanillo** when travel is limited to the tourist and port areas between Marina Puerto Santiago and Playa las Brisas. **Guerrero state:** the entire state, including **Acapulco, Zihuatanejo, Ixtapa** and **Taxco** – excluding the downtown area.

Michoacán state: the entire state, except the city of **Morelia** and the city centre and

port area of **Lázaro Cárdenas**, and federal toll road 15D to transit the state between Mexico City and Guadalajara.

Sinaloa state: the entire state, except the cities of **Mazatlán**, **Los Mochis** and the **Port of Topolobampo**. Travel should be limited to Zona Dorada and the historic town centre in **Mazatlán**, and direct routes to and from these locations and the airport.

Tamaulipas state: the entire state, particularly between cities in Tamaulipas using interior Mexican highways, and in the cities of **Matamoros** and **Nuevo Laredo**, particularly after dark.

Travel should also be reconsidered to:

Baja California state: Mexicali Valley, and highways after dark.

Chihuahua state: the downtown area and southeast of Boulevard Independencia in **Ciudad Juárez**; Morelos, Villa and Zapata districts within the city of **Chihuahua**; **Nuevo Casas Grandes**, **Ojinaga** and **Palomas** areas after dark.

Coahuila state: Highway 40 and areas south, and **Piedras Negras** and **Ciudad Acuña** after dark.

Durango state: the area west and south of Highway 45.

Guanajuato state: the area south of Highway 45D.

Jalisco state: all regions bordering Michoacán, Highway 80 south of **Cocula** and Highway 544 from **Mascota** to **San Sebastián del Oeste**.

Nayarit state: the cities of **Tepic** and **San Blas**.

Oaxaca state: the Isthmus region, including **Juchitán de Zaragoza**, **Salina Cruz** and **San Blas Atempa**, Highway 200 northwest of **Pinotepa**.

Sonora state: the triangular region west of **Mariposa US Port of Entry**, east of **Sonoyta** and north of **Altar**; **Nogales** north of Avenida Instituto Tecnológico, west of Periferico and east of Federal Highway 15D, and the residential areas to the east of **Plutarco Elías Calles**; the eastern edge of the state bordering the state of Chihuahua, and; south of **Hermosillo**, including **San Carlos**, **Guaymas** and **Empalme**. Highway 15 and Highway 8 after dark.

Zacatecas state: **Fresnillo** and the area south of Highway 45 and west of Highway 23 in western part of the state.

Furthermore, travellers should also exercise moderate caution in **México, Morelos, Nayarit, Nuevo León, San Luis Potosí** and **Veracruz** due to violent crime and/or gang activity, as well as in **Aguascalientes, Baja California Sur, Chiapas, Hidalgo, Mexico City, Puebla, Querétaro, Quintana Roo, Tabasco** and **Tlaxcala** due to increasing violent crime.

Seasonal crime along toll roads in **Sonora** and **Sinaloa** involving the theft at gunpoint of money, jewelry and other items of value peaks during the period between late November and mid-January and again between mid-March and mid-April. Most incidents are reported at night or in the hours before dawn and involve two vehicles. A car or truck with lights resembling those used on law enforcement vehicles pulls up behind the victim's car and motions the driver to pull to the side of the road or down a side road where the thieves' second vehicle is waiting. The victims are told at gunpoint to get out of their car. One of the thieves guards them while the others remove valuables from the car. Usually the thieves instruct the victims to wait for a period of time before trying to leave, and not to speak with police or law enforcement about the incident. They usually leave the keys for the victim's car in a place where the driver can locate them easily. Then the thieves depart, and the occupants of the car can resume their journey. To date, no one has been seriously injured or killed during these robberies. The best defense against this type of assault is to drive only during daylight hours.

The number of armed vigilante groups and so-called self-defence clubs, including indigenous militias, has also increased exponentially in frontline cartel states, notably in the **Tierra Caliente region** stretching across some areas of the states of **Michoacán, Guerrero** and **State of México**, as local trust in Mexican authorities continues to diminish. Dozens of towns in these states were "seized" by various vigilante groups in 2013 and later as a form of defence against forced cartel "protection" or racketeering payments and in an attempt to drive the cartels out. Civilian armed checkpoints frequently pop-up overnight and vehicles are searched. Increased caution should be maintained in the **Tierra Caliente region**. Keep a low profile, register itineraries with local consulates and consider contracting a security escort.

Foreign nationals are advised to avoid travelling in areas of the state of **Chiapas** where disputes are known to be ongoing, in particular the rural areas east of **Ocosingo** and the southeastern jungle region east of **Comitán**. Disturbing incidents involving threats and violence against foreign nationals and businesses catering to visitors have been reported. Although violence has greatly diminished since reaching a peak in the mid-

1990s, armed rebels and armed civilian groups are still present in some areas of the state, and there is often no effective law enforcement or police protection. Some locals resent the presence of foreigners and openly express their hostility. Violent criminal gangs, including the Mara Salvatrucha, operate along the southern border with Guatemala, though they tend to prey on migrants from Central and South American countries rather than visitors.

Safety

Emergency Numbers

All emergencies	911	
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Automated Teller Machines (ATMs): Visitors should be very guarded when using ATMs in Mexico. ATMs should be used only during the day and at large facilities with armed guards, for example inside banks or business establishments. Avoid using ATMs on the street - thieves and express kidnappers sometimes accost victims on the street and coerce them to withdraw money from their ATM accounts.

Beaches and Public Areas: Mexico's beaches are generally safe. However, warning flags on the beach should be taken seriously. Do not enter the water if black flags are up. In **Cancún**, there is often a strong undertow along the beach stretching from the **Hyatt Regency Hotel** south to the **Sol y Mar Hotel**. A number of drownings and near-drownings have been reported on the east coast of **Cozumel**, mainly in the **Playa San Martin-Chen Rio area**. On the Pacific side, in **Acapulco**, swimming should be restricted to the bay area only. Several foreign nationals have died while swimming in rough surf at the **Revolcadero Beach** near **Acapulco**. Beaches in the **Baja California Peninsula**, including **Cabo San Lucas**, are dangerous due to rogue waves and rip tides; hazardous beaches in this area are clearly marked in Spanish and English. Pools and other recreational facilities may not meet safety or sanitation standards. Avoid swimming in beaches or pools without lifeguards. If you do, exercise extreme caution. Diving into unknown bodies of water can cause serious injury or death due to hidden rocks or shallow depths.

Travellers to Mexican resorts should carefully evaluate the potential risk of recreational activities. Rental aquatic and other sports equipment may not meet international safety standards nor be covered by any accident insurance. Scuba diving equipment should be inspected carefully, as it may be substandard or defective due to frequent use. Beware of dive shops that promise to 'certify' inexperienced scuba divers after only a few hours' instruction. Parasailing has killed tourists who were dragged through palm trees or were slammed into hotel walls. Jet-ski accidents have also killed tourists, especially in group outings when inexperienced guides allowed their clients to follow each other too closely.

Food and Drink: There are many food carts on the streets of Mexican cities and towns. Foreign nationals are advised to avoid street food in general, as hygienic preparation practices are not always reliable. Ice is often made with tap water, which is not considered clean by international standards. Using tap water to brush teeth or clean dishes is considered safe, however. In night clubs and bars, especially in **Mexico City**, many tourists have had their drinks spiked. Visitors should watch their drinks being prepared or order bottled drinks, such as beer, to be opened at your table.

Smoking: Effective January 2023, it is illegal to smoke and vape in all public places nationwide, including hotels, beaches and parks; those who defy the law face fines and potential jail time. Only private homes and private outdoor spaces are exempt. The law is not strictly enforced. It is illegal to import, sell or buy electronic cigarettes, vaping devices and solutions. Customs officials will confiscate such items resulting in possible fines or detention.

Police checkpoints: Immigration authorities conduct frequent searches on highways, including in **Chiapas** and **Oaxaca**. The police have the authority to ask for proof of legal status in Mexico at any time; keep a copy of your identification document and entry form/residency card with you at all times.

Police: Police forces at the state and municipal levels are of a preventive nature and lack many of the powers their federal counterparts possess, including investigatory powers. The Federal Police was dissolved into the National Guard in 2019. Corruption permeates Mexico's police at all levels, particularly at the municipal and state levels where they are poorly paid. The National Guard tends to be better funded, less corrupt and more efficient, but their involvement in federal-level crimes creates a situation whereby state and municipal level crimes are often not investigated and go unpunished. Actual number of cases of any particular crime is much higher than reported, as crimes are frequently underreported due to fear and intimidation against victims and their families. Over 650 municipalities in Mexico regularly go unpoliced, with no security forces operating within these areas.

Foreign nationals will most likely run into police on Mexican roadways. In tourist centres, such as **Cancún** and **Acapulco**, it is common for police to stop tourists in rental cars for excessive speeding and demand the 'payment' of a ticket on the spot. This type of forced bribery is common and patience is required to go through the motions of paying the ticket then and there rather than taking a trip to the local police station. In areas where drug trafficking organisations proliferate, especially in cities along the **Mexico-US border**, police are often directly involved with criminal

enterprises. Although they tend not to bother foreign nationals, should the police suggest you get in a car and go to the local precinct with them, try to notify your consulate, or at least someone who is travelling with you, before agreeing to go along.

Pollution: Particulate matter, lead, and other pollutants contribute significantly to the poor air quality in **Mexico City**, largely considered one of the most polluted cities in Latin America. Foreign nationals should monitor local news as high levels of pollution are closely monitored by the media, and often result in travel restrictions by vehicle. Locals often wear masks when air pollution reaches high levels. High air pollution levels across **Valle de México**, including most of **Mexico City**, have prompted authorities to impose restrictions on the movement of privately-owned vehicles.

Law: Mexico has a legal system that comprises United States constitutional theory, civil law, and judicial review of legislative acts. Lower levels of the courts are widely believed to be corrupt and are generally inefficient; impunity rates are extremely high.

Visitors should report crimes to the local police and to their Embassy or Consular section. Prosecution is very difficult in Mexico, but visitors can seek private assistance if in need of an attorney.

Traffic Infractions and Speeding: Drivers, including those of vehicles that are rented or borrowed, can be arrested for any illegal items or substances found within the car. It is common to be pulled over for speeding, even if you are not. This is a common ploy to extort by force foreign nationals. Mexican law requires that only owners drive their vehicles, or that the owner be inside the vehicle. If not, the vehicle may be seized by Mexican customs and will not be returned under any circumstances.

Although laws and their enforcement will tend to vary between states there are some general advisories. Speed limits in Mexico are generally 100kph (62 mph) on highways and between 40kph (24 mph) and 60kph (37 mph) in urban zones. Children under the age of five are prohibited from sitting in the front. Drivers must wear a seatbelt and it is recommended that all passengers do the same.

Drugs and Alcohol: The legal drinking age in Mexico is 18 years or older but this law is not strictly enforced. In many places the consumption of alcohol in public ('open container'), unless in a licensed restaurant, café or bar, is illegal and usually punishable by a day in jail. The legal limit for driving is 0.08 milligrams of alcohol per millilitre of blood. If caught, penalties include fines, arrest and possible imprisonment.

The penalty for drug-related crimes, including driving under the influence of alcohol, is severe, and those caught and convicted of drug crimes can face up to 25 years in

prison. The purchase of controlled medication requires a prescription from a licensed Mexican physician. In the past, Mexican doctors have been arrested for writing prescriptions without due cause. In those instances, foreign nationals who bought the medications have been held in jail for months waiting for the Mexican judicial system to decide their fate.

Sexual Solicitation: The Mexican Government has announced an aggressive programme to discourage sexual tourism and to severely punish those who engage in sexual activity with minors. Soliciting the services of a minor for sexual purposes is illegal in Mexico, and is punishable by imprisonment.

Importing and Exporting Goods: Mexican customs authorities enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export from Mexico of items such as trucks and autos, trailers, antiquities, medications, medical equipment and business equipment. Prior to travelling, contact your local Mexican Embassy for specific information regarding customs requirements. The possession of Mexican archaeological artefacts is prohibited and punishable by law. Individuals attempting to export such goods will face heavy fines and/or jail time. When travelling with art or archaeological replicas, it is important to carry documents that certify this condition.

Weapons Possession: Possession of firearms without a licence is illegal in Mexico. Entering Mexico with a firearm, certain types of knives or even a single round of ammunition is illegal, even if the weapon or ammunition is taken into Mexico unintentionally. The Mexican Government strictly enforces its laws restricting the entry of firearms and ammunition along all land borders and at airports and seaports. Violations have resulted in arrests, convictions, and long prison sentences for foreign nationals. Despite restrictions, firearm ownership is on the rise in Mexico as perceptions of a declining security situation push many to obtain illegal weapons, mostly pistols. Consequently, muggings and assaults with pistols, rather than knives, are on the rise.

Water Safety: Water-borne disease is generally not a problem in Mexico. However, due to less rigorous water sanitation standards and practices, foreign nationals should only drink bottled water. Tap water is not recommended for drinking, but it is safe for brushing teeth.

Corruption/Business environment: Mexico has a long tradition of corrupt practices, which are firmly rooted in the country's systems and structures. Travellers are likely to encounter corruption in Mexico's public service sector, particularly by police officers and border guards who will try to extort a mordida (literally 'a bite'), which is Mexican

slang for a bribe. The traditional mordida refers to small payments to police in exchange for overlooking both real and bogus traffic violations. Bribes should not be directly offered to an official, as it is illegal and could result in more trouble. Residents of Mexico, however, are more likely to experience corruption in bureaucratic processes. Corruption also permeates Mexico's business sector, as many companies bribe government officials to avoid labour and environmental penalties, obtain a faster connection to public services, influence the drafting of bills and regulations, and to win privileges of one kind or another, especially government contracts.

Culture

Cultural Sensitivities: Mexicans are extremely polite and often considered to be quite formal; any attempt to speak Spanish is appreciated, however, and seen as a gesture of goodwill.

Traditional Latin machismo is still practised, meaning most female travellers will find that a degree of harassment is inevitable. It is best to ignore any unwanted comments and attention; avoiding eye contact can help.

Mexican Indians in the northern mountains and in **Oaxaca, Chiapas** and **Yucatán states** are an integrated part of society, yet remain wary of tourists. Ask permission to take photos and show respect to avoid confrontation. Discrimination by locals against ethnic minorities is prevalent.

Political Sensitivities: Mexicans are proud of their country and history. It is best to avoid controversial topics related to politics, corruption and drug cartels, particularly in public.

Religious Sensitivities: Mexicans are predominantly Catholic. There are many sacred saints and hallowed grounds across the country. When visiting such sites, showing a polite disposition and asking permission to take photos is the best way to avoid confrontation. Although shorts are permissible in churches, short shorts and other revealing clothes are frowned upon.

Specific Traveller Advice

Female Travellers

Local Customs and Laws: There are no local customs or laws that a female traveller should take into consideration in Mexico. However, beach attire should be relegated to the beach, and is considered inappropriate for town, shops, or around restaurants. Familiarise yourself with your destination prior to travel, and be respectful and mindful of any possible cultural sensitivities, which may include dress, behaviour and topics of discussions.

Safety: There are many safety concerns that a female traveller should take into consideration in Mexico. There are high rates of harassment, sexual assaults and violence targeting women in Mexico, including in major cities like **Mexico City** and **Guadalajara**. Female travellers may receive unwanted attention from men, ranging from open displays of catcalling and staring to physical groping, including at day time. It is best to ignore these advances or confrontations and walk away. In the event that harassment escalates, draw attention to what is happening and locals will likely come to your aid. There have been reports of female tourists being sexually assaulted in resort areas, including in **Cancún** and **Acapulco** by staff members or other guests, while taxi drivers and security personnel have also been implicated. Highest rates of femicides are reported in **Colima** and **Monterrey**, while the highest numbers are registered in **State of Mexico, Nuevo León, Mexico City, Veracruz, Chiapas** and **Oaxaca**. Most of the assaults occurred at night or in the early morning on deserted beaches and in hotel rooms. Female travellers should exercise caution when reporting crimes to local authorities as there have been reports of law enforcement undermining incidents of harassment and assault. Consider consulting your home consulate/embassy for legal advice and ensure you receive a copy of the police report.

Do not walk alone at night, especially in unfamiliar neighbourhoods, desolate areas or beaches, due to the persisting risk of violent crimes, including sexual assault targeting foreign female nationals. Never leave your drink unattended or accept drinks from strangers or new acquaintances that you have not seen poured. Be cautious about accepting invitations to join a new acquaintance in non-public places. Taxis and public transport are among the most common places for harassment in Mexico. Only use official and registered taxis or reputed radio cabs and avoid public transport, especially at night, to limit exposure to possible cases of harassment. Some cities may have women-only taxis, operated by a female driver; consider using these companies,

especially if travelling at night. When available, consider sitting in women's only sections in public transport due to recent reports of harassment on public transport. Let a trusted person know your whereabouts.

Health and Wellness: Women have access to some specialised gynaecological and reproductive health services, medicines and products in Mexico, especially in urban areas. Abortion is legal in **Mexico City** up until 12 weeks of pregnancy, beyond which a court will determine the legal grounds for abortion. **Oaxaca, Veracruz, Hidalgo, Colima, Baja California, Sinaloa, Guerrero, Quintana Roo**, ****Baja California Sur**** and ****Coahuila**** also allow abortion in most circumstances. The other states penalise abortion with some exceptions. In all states abortion is allowed in case of rape and in the majority of the states if the woman's life is in danger. In 2021, the Supreme Court ruled that criminalising abortion is unconstitutional. In most states, however, custodial sentences are considered related to abortion. Specialised clinics, emergency contraceptives, contraceptives and a large variety of feminine hygiene products are available in urban areas and to some extent in rural areas. Consider bringing an adequate supply of female-specific OTC drugs, feminine hygiene products and oral contraceptive pills, which may not be available locally. Consult a health professional prior to travel, especially if pregnant or planning to become pregnant, due to a potential risk of Zika virus.

LGBT+

Homosexuality is legal in Mexico. There are many legal protections for LGBT+ persons in the country, including anti-discrimination laws, laws concerning gender identity or expression and adoption by same-sex couples. Same-sex marriage is legal in **Mexico City** and throughout the country, either by legislation, executive action or Supreme Court order. LGBT+ activity and persons are somewhat socially accepted. Large LGBT communities and active social scenes can be found in **Mexico City, Puerto Vallarta, Guadalajara, Veracruz, Cancún, Mérida** and **Acapulco**. While most LGBT+ travellers are unlikely to face any difficulties or legal issues for travel, social conservatism is more prevalent in some parts of the country. Despite legislative advances, Mexico reports the second most hate crimes against the LGBT+ community in Latin America, with dozens of violent acts targeting LGBT+ community members and activists annually. Travellers may prefer to be discreet about sexual orientation and avoid excessive public displays of affection in areas where attitudes towards the LGBT+ community are unknown or generally not accepted. Transgender travellers may wish to consider having their passport and identification changed to reflect new gender before travelling. Exercise general safety precautions.

Technology & Communication Risk

Travellers are unlikely to face risks related to information and communication technology (ICT) in Mexico.

Internet access and social media have no restrictions. There are no concerns related to device searches or sensitive technology. Device searches and inspections at the border are unlikely. There are no restrictions in relation to bringing or operating sensitive equipment, which may include photo cameras, satellite phones, drones, and other GPS systems, in the country.

State or criminal penetration of private data is likely. Authorities implement some state surveillance of ICT networks in the country as journalists and the political opposition have alleged that their communication is monitored.

Travellers should exercise basic ICT safety precautions. However, travellers should note that ICT laws and practices are subject to change on short notice, and travellers are recommended to confirm the legality/appropriateness of their specific ICT needs prior to departure.

Travellers should be aware that the country enforces a limited degree of surveillance of telephone and electronic communications and travellers should remember that communication may be monitored. Online activities may be monitored. Cyber criminal groups may be present in the country. Exercise discretion in deciding to bring sensitive data into the country.

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